Homage to Shravana Belgola

Homage to Shravana

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Belgola
MARG PUBLICATIONS

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Jain images and icons belonging to various periods and styles in the matha *at Shravana Belgola*

The Lapsing of the Jina
as the source of the living force of images in Jain art

1

Of the early centuries of the Vedic Aryan prevalence there is no mirror of history – all is myth and legend or hearsay. And we can only speculate about how our ancestors lived, what they believed, and whether what they felt and thought out has some relevance for us

Of course, the way men and women survived, at any time in the past has relevance for our own lives, because, essentially, human beings have faced the same predicament always To be born, to grow on this planet and to face the challenge of inevitable death

The atmosphere, in which the earlier peoples survived, was different from what it is centuries later

In our own land, Nature was Supreme

After the proverbial flood, there grew deep intricate amorphous jungles, fed by the waters of the yearly rains, the waterfalls, the streams and the rivers. So that where there is bare earth today as, for instance, in the north-western frontier, upto the Hindukush, there were impenetratable forests until historic times

The original Neolithic inhabitants and the peoples of the Proto-Dravadian cultures, as well as the Aryan tribes, who destroyed the so-called Indus Valley civilizations, had to clear the wild vegetation to recover land for food growing

And those dynamic peoples who cleared the lands naturally became lords of the various soils The priests who were their intermediaries with heaven, consecrated the earths won, because the universe was all part of God in the Vedic cosmogony, any part cultivated was of Him, from whom men recreated what He had already created. And the various incarnations of the Supreme God were worshipped because they were all beneficent Indra gave rain Surya gave sunshine Usha brought the dew of the dawn

As the hero-kings drove their chariots into the farther regions in order to increase the areas of their occupation of the land, the Brahmins evolved various rites like the *Yajna*, through offerings to Agni, the God of Fire. There were symbolic sacrifices of worldly possessions to the Ultimate Spirit, who was conceived as the first owner, by virtue of whose grace the chieftains were flourishing

The intricacy of these ceremonies increased with the need to interpenetrate the finite with infinite, the recognition of eternity within the passing moment, so far and so near, separated when the One had become Many, and yet sought through spellbinding magical incantations In time the transition from the seen to the unseen became so complex a process, that the priests prolonged the sacrifices to many days of secret prayers, with intricate esoteric rites, during which the inspired hymns were recited in rhetorical flourishes to achieve the flow of the soul inwards, where dwells the Supreme Power

The exigencies of this achievement of the Transcendent Self, beyond the ego, required purification, which was only possible through the intervention of the initiated priestcraft They, therefore, attained the highest status The chieftains, whom they led across the physical realities to the invisible, enjoyed the second status of holy warriors, Kshatriyas The tradesmen and others, who sold clarified butter, grain, milk and other worldly goods, were third in the order. The people who worked to provide the basic necessities, like the potters, the smiths, the carpenters, were assigned to the fourth caste, Shudras. The aboriginal peoples,

1 The twin hills Chandragiri and Indragiri at Shravana Belg la ith rocks dark as a mass of great water laden clouds and variegated with the embellishment of bunche of flowers and fruits of various choice trees and with extensive low lands valleys ravines great ca erns a d inaccessible places filled with herds of b ars panthers tigers bears hyenas snakes and leer — a sixth century inscription on the ro k surface f the Chandragiri Hill

and the menials whose work involved contact with dirt and who smelt of the odours of carcasses from the skins they removed, or the dung they cleared, were outcastes beyond the pale

These functional divisions were all sanctioned in the name of the Supreme God Various myths were evolved to show that the Ultimate Spirit was within the reach of all, by giving each set of people their own incarnation of the Great One, in order to inspire reverence for the special tasks which were apportioned to a particular caste

The realities of the actual human relations within the caste order did not, however, give to the lowest, the dignity which was sought to be given to them as a concession to the idea that, through their *Karma*, they would achieve birth in a higher caste. The actual discrimination degraded the suppressed peoples and confined them to ghettoes outside the villages, where the privileged priests and nobles ruled the roost

The strength of the two upper hierarchies grew with time And the power to preserve this social order gave them such prerogatives as to reduce the outcastes to the squalor of hell They were always found to be doing something wrong and being punished for it

What was a crime in the eyes of the king was also a sin committed by the disinherited He or she was bound to err, because of something he or she had done in the past life And penance had to be done to appease the gods for the wrong For instance, if one was bitten by a dog, a cat or a camel, it was a sin, for which penance had to be done The unfortunate one must have done bad deeds in his past life, and had thus done something to earn degradation in this life Therefore, he was liable to a double penalty. The Raja and the Brahmin both imposed penances for the sin, the former for the breach of law and the latter for the outrage against the supersensory order of the *Dharma*

The continuance of penances, ex-communications and condemnations was like death, as those who belonged to the ruling hierarchies had brought about the commonly accepted idea that Prajapati, the Supreme Creator, had inspired the law

God had also conferred on them the privileges of wealth. And the Kshatriya princes and nobles lived ostentatiously, hunting the beasts, for rich feasts in palaces where the senses were excited by the loveliest women

The priests enacted sacrifices of living creatures on behalf of the upper orders.

Of course, the Pundits had cleverly interpreted Prajapati's generosity to show that if the sinner's cooked food was not acceptable to them, gold, silver, precious stones and lamps for the temple could be offered by them to the shrine.

The *Varnashram* was thus maintained by conventions which had become the very fabric of the God-ordained society

In this context, the protest of Mahavira against the Vedic Dharma, came from the psychical necessity of the son of a Raja, to free himself and others from perversions all round Life had been made into a fixed divine order, which condemned millions of people to live by servile obedience in spite of the injustice which they dimly sensed, but which they were unable to oppose from the fear of committing further sins The mass had been reduced to an aboriginal equality of *karmic* discipline, and to passivity, in which the anarchic individual could not

rebel unless he himself was from among the twice-borns, who had awakened from acceptance of all injunctions into the awareness that these were inhuman

Even in the Vedic period there was dissent against the humiliations of the outcastes and the animal sacrifices

Among the protesters were compassionate people like the first Jain Tirthankara, Rishabhanatha.

We do not know if he had already founded a sect which defied the Vedas and opposed the cruelties of the Brahminical ritual But in the *Yajurveda*, three Tirthankaras — Rishabha, Ajita and Aristanemi — are mentioned.

Of the later period, the Jains claim Neminatha, the twenty-second Tirthankara as a contemporary of the hero-god Krishna of the *Mahabharata* war

In the eighth century B.C., with the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parshvanatha, the Jain protest movement is said to have gathered many adherents, who did not accept the sanctions of the Vedic religion and caste prejudice.

And, then Mahavira in the sixth century B C showed through his own penances the love of every breathing creature and preached complete detachment from all earthly connections as the only way to achieve liberation from birth and rebirth

In essence the gospel of the Mahavira, of *Ahimsa*, non-hurting, because all things animate and inanimate have life was a protest against the denials of humanity, by those who took pain out of the helpless ones And he seems to have been inspired by the feeling of utmost tenderness for the degraded, the crushed and the disinherited.

2

Vardhaman, Mahavira, or the Jina, the Knower, as he came to be called, was born in a princely house. He seems to have been a highly sensitive child. Legend has made popular the story that, as a babe in the womb, he lay still so that his kicks should not hurt his mother And there are other symbolic myths to suggest that he was early aware of the pain of life.

As he grew up he seems, precociously, to have been inspired by the feeling of *Ahimsa*, which was preached by Parshvanatha, who is known to have flourished in Varanasi about 850 B. C. He is also said to have known of the predecessors of this faith of thousands of years before, and of the *Niganthas*, the unattached ones, who followed Parshvanatha and practised the fourfold restraints: not to injure, not be untruthful, not to take what is not given, and not to possess anything. It is conceivable that his parents had come under the influence of Parshva's followers and the atmosphere of his home was already charged with the passion for purity

The urge to free himself, and others, from the tentacles of the octopus of existence, made him go through various austerities, like not eating food for days, nor drinking water, discarding all covering of his body in cold and hot weather, exposing himself to the burning sun-heat and accepting alms when given and unmindful of the abuse hurled at him by the people he felt deeply for.

Vardhaman Mahavira realized that the folk had become bond-slaves of the desire for happiness encouraged by the Brahmins, that they drank liquor to forget themselves, hurt each other

through misunderstandings, remained ignorant of the fact that the world itself was a vast jungle full of cruelty, where every living thing did harm to other sentient beings, hurt each other, which hurts, the Brahmins had made sacred by blood sacrifices and by permitting the eating of flesh of animals, fishes and crabs.

3

The searcher differentiated the degree of bondage of various beings.

At the lowest level are *Migoda*, plants, animals and other microscopic undifferentiated beings, with only one sense, the sense of touch. Next to them are *Narakis*, hell-beings Then there are *Manushya*, human beings. And above them are *devas*, gods who live on the heavenly level, but sometimes leave home and come down to the earthly planes, specially the demigods or spirits, celestial musicians, *yakshas*, goblins and demons

Thus all are subject to *karmic* fetters but human beings can break the bonds which shackle the soul

In his reactions to reality, Vardhaman reveals himself, then, as one of the first few existentialists of the world These attitudes were uttered in certain sayings, which his followers elaborated after he lapsed at the age of seventytwo, through fasting, and attained salvation.

Mahavira maintained that Being is both eternal substance and passing modes, as it is multidimensional existent, which cannot be simplistically defined as eternal or non-eternal He suggested a tentative might-be approach, insofar as the philosopher can say· 'In some respect it is this, but in another aspect it is that' This balancing between the various alternatives makes every assertion concrete A particular thing exists only in a particular place, time, or state

Thus the Vedantist truth, 'The Soul is eternal', may be qualified by the statement· 'The soul may be eternal only in some respects, as substance, though not in modes.'

This open-minded attitude is not merely a loose acceptance, but a critical compromise with extremes, to tone down one-sidedness, and suggests a comprehensive outlook by the admission of contraries

Mahavira seems to have felt that the soul is trapped in the chain of bondages and has to be purified before salvation can be achieved from the cycle of existence.

Curiously, starting off as a heretic against the Brahmin idea of salvation from *Maya* by transcending the ego to reach *Atman*, he pursued an ethic not dissimilar to the later Brahmin metaphysic, in which salvation can be reached by shedding desire of all kinds.

Only, unlike the Brahmins who said God is bliss and permeates everything, the Jina believed that man is anguish, even as the Buddha said, 'Sorrow is.'

Different colours have been ascribed to the soul which emancipates itself. In hell existence the soul is black, blue or grey. Some demigods are not quite emancipated and subsist between

earth and hell, with yellow or lotus-pink or luminous white-coloured souls. Human souls may be of any six colours, depending on their moral growth The colour of those who are freed is white.

4

Strangely enough the first eleven converts to Mahavira's thoughts were Brahmins. And, doubtless, the love of learning which these and other followers brought, began, soon after the sage's *nirvana*, to elaborate each hunch of the Master And, during the two thousand five hundred years or more after the Jina's lapsing, several lakhs of words have been spoken, written and imaged to spread his philosophy of non-hurting, in our sub-continent

As the cue behind every search for a way of life seems to have been the impulse to face the being-in-this-world situation every day, many thinkers have tried, from the chaos and the misery of toil, to tackle the dread forces of nature, and the conflicts inherent in human relations, from the urges to escape from mundane existence to a higher state of consciousness, which may be free from tension.

The need for dispassion in many faiths considers the conquest over the lures of the world as the pre-condition for freedom.

In the Jain beliefs, this overcoming of the obstacles was taken to the extreme limit of asceticism, torment, even self-flagellation, certainly by the *munis* Following the example of Mahavira, the more trusted of his disciples renounced earthly existence, went naked or 'sky clad', ate what food was offered to them, by way of alms and drank water from streams, in the cupped palms of their hands, accepted revilement, disdain and abuse, to cultivate the will never to hurt any living thing by word or deed, and to achieve the condition of lapsing from this absurd existence

Many followers accepted the restraints of the wordly life, and practised the ethics of the faith, as also the ritual of purification as far as it could be practised in a practical compromise with dailiness

The first of these restraints is *Ahimsa* A murderer who ends the life of a victim commits the biggest *himsa*. Surgeons who give pain while doing operations on patients are guilty of less serious violence. The hunting of beasts and catching of fishes are hurtful occupations, while the peasant who kills insects while ploughing is doing this unwittingly. So the less injury-doing professions are allowed, such as employment in governmental work, farming, learning, commerce and crafts. Those who can accept more restraints are advised not to enter professions like slave trade, selling liquor, branding animals, breeding destructive animals and several other occupations which ultimately involve pain to others.

The commoner has to vow before a Jain mendicant: 'I will desist from the knowing or intentional destruction of all great lives.... As long as I live, I will neither kill nor cause others to kill. I shall strive to refrain from all such activities whether of body, speech or mind.'

The second restraint is to speak the truth, and to abstain from lying. Except that if a hunter asks which side a deer has gone, a deliberate lie spoken to protect the animal, is truth and not a lie. The best compromise is silence.

The third restraint is not stealing, or taking what is not given. Things received through in-

heritance, or legitimately purchased, or given are not theft But whenever one is greedy and takes other people's things, it is theft.

The fourth restraint is from illicit indulgence in sex, such as with the wife of another man, or with a temporary concubine and even carnal pleasure in one's own spouse. As sex gives pleasure, it must be indulged in only for pro-creation.

The fifth restraint is from possession, through non-possession, or non-attachment The egotistical 'mine' and 'thine' is deprecated Non-possession is against the four passions and nine sentiments, which are qualities of internal possessiveness This detachment is possible only when one has given up external possessions like land, house, silver, gold, livestock, grain, clothing, furniture, maidservants and manservants. As the laity is not expected to give up all these things entirely, they are supposed to put limits on what they own.

A layman is compared to 'a hot iron ball which burns everything it touches ' He must, therefore, limit himself within certain boundaries, or well-defined areas of river, seas and mountains Also, he must not join the fifteen undesirable professions. He should not cook or eat at night, preferably always eat before sunset This injunction may have been to avoid killing the insects which crowd house-holds in India after dark

Conspiring about how to harm others, mischief like gambling, cutting trees, digging ground for fun, spreading poisons, carrying lethal weapons, fighting, helping hunters, listening to *kama sutra,* seeing *tamasha* and such things as provoke lust and violence foul speech, abuse luxury, — these are to be avoided.

There are many other minor restraints

It is meritorious to fast on four holy days and on the 8th and the 14th days of the moon's waxing and waning

The layman must do *dana,* give gifts

And one must face death in calm, by fasting and meditations, specially during the last days of existence

Those of the laity who wish to graduate further to higher stages, short of actual mendicancy, can apply the restraints more rigorously, performing *puja* or Jina-worship before uncovering the meal

Another higher stage can be reached if one gives up eating all kinds of green leaves and shoots, roots and tubers, use of unboiled water, living mainly on lentils and dry food stuffs

Abandonment of all incontinence and abandonment of physical contact with opposite sex brings the devotee to the higher stage.

At the final stages, the layman may become totally uninvolved and go away from home and go to live in a temple or in a place meant for world renouncers

In the old days, the various rituals of renunciation required five and a half years to ascend the eleven ladders The restraints accepted are binding for life.

5

The intricacy of the rituals for meditations, fasting, confession of wrongdoing, sharing food

and cultivation of love towards all beings, delight in the virtuous one's compassion for the afflicted, calm before those who are not well disposed towards one, the cessation of sorrow, the ending of *karma* and achieving of death while in meditation and other penances, all these were defined during the centuries with the utmost moral vigour.

That the ascetic faith has survived almost intact, at least among the *munis*, the monks and the nuns, of the two main Jain sects, the extreme *Digambara* and the concessional *Shvetambara* sects, shows that the Jina and his devoted followers seized upon the instinctive urge of the soul for freedom, by the will to cut all possible bonds. They seem to have known of the deep concern of men and women for their souls. They had analysed the feelings which give rise to emotions, and emotions which induce passions and egotistical thoughts. And they sensed those imperceptible vibrations, the energies flowing in the under-layers of the psyche

The processes of renunciation evidence to the completest withdrawal of the sensibility from false pride The dark necessity to sacrifice oneself for others and to do penance for the active cultivation of faith, in lapsing, which was a kind of death that conferred immortality, evidences to deep-rooted aspirations in exalted human beings for perfection of the body-soul

Aspiration to salvation thus became participation in the process of being as becoming. The soul became a mirror of the changing, and yet perpetuating presence, renewal incarnate, through the practice of virtue.

It seems that the fundamentalist Jina had frequently pondered on the borders of percepts and concepts and urged forward towards freedom. These are visible throughout Mahavira's daring analysis of the stuff of experience, the subtlest apperceptions about the genesis of guilts, awareness of constriction of the personality by instinct, and comprehension of resonances of the soul in its most delicate nuances of movement of imperceptible feelings.

6

The perfection which the Jina was known to have attained, through the *sadhana* of many years of *tapas* of anguish, thus became an ideal for the followers. The state of *moksha* had to be achieved by all Some of the most courageous ones ventured out in every generation and became monks and nuns.

The vast majority of men and women seem, however, to have accepted the Jain faith as a series of conventions, of religiosity, a few of which may be followed

Mahavira had been known to have described the perfect being thus.

'All sounds recoil there, where speculation has no room, nor does the mind penetrate there The liberated is not long or small or round or triangular . . . He is not black . . . nor white . . He is not feminine, or masculine or neuter. He perceives He knows. But there is no analogy, by which to know the nature of the liberated soul Its essence is without form. There is no condition of the unconditioned.' (A. S : 330-332)

How were the lay persons terrified by the strict injuctions of the faith to think of attaining such understanding? In what way to begin the strange adventure of comprehension of the condition of the unconditioned? Where to begin the meditations, the prayers and the incantations?

Always, throughout time, human beings have seen things in images, though in pictures, apprehended phenomena by anology of metaphor. Words have always remained inexpressive of imperceptible feelings, because they fly away before one vibration of the soul can be aware of the other

Therefore, image precedes idea Man picks up a stone, which looks like his feeling of perfection, for instance a round stone, and dimly sees its coherence And in order to catch the fleeting feeling of delight in roundness which may not come again, he places the immutable harmonious hard material shape on a pedestal This symbol is put there not to inspire thought in himself, but to fix his intangible feelings It is to make certain what is uncertain And by the fixation man frees himself from the anxiety of having to catch the impermanent through the reversals of the nerves, the ebb and the flow of vibrations, the dreaded changefulness.

If the primitive man and Plato concretised the living reality of an apparition of harmony in roundness, how should the conventional man, trapped in the human shape, catch the perfect Jina as inspirer of the journey on the path of purification?

For a long time after the Jina lapsed, the strict teaching probably did not allow any concession to the laity for the deification of the strange light But presumably, as, in spite of the Buddha's clear advice that no image be made of him, so despite the Jina's suggestion that the apprehension cannot be caught in any way except when it is attained through renunciation, shadows of his living presence begun to cast themselves in poetical phrases, in prayers and in the dim feelings that he was directing every movement of the worshippers

And when, after many generations, he and his words had become myths and legends, from the sheer need for contemplation of the presence of the searcher among the shadows for the realities he had talked about, it is possible that the thought of him knocked on the threshold of every consciousness, and efforts began to be made to touch the sensations whose curves had so far no locus standing the obscure references of his various teachings

2 *Lord Bahubali, A D 981*
The statue of Gommateshvara, about 18 metres high and sculpted in living rock is the biggest free-standing monolithic image in the world Other figures, like the Buddhas of Bamiyan, or the statues of Rameses II in Egypt are bigger in size but have been carved in high relief and not in the round like this one

A question may well arise that why does Bahubali — who is not a Tirthankara — occupy such an important place in the Jain pantheon, so much so that the largest statues are dedicated to him? The answer to this question lies in the fact that for the Jains, Bahubali is the first siddha, *the soul that has attained* nirvana, *of this cosmic-cycle But more than that it is the story of his life and his severe austerities that have evoked everyone's admiration and devotion*

The colossus stands nude and in kayotasarga *pose This is a yogic position where the body is under complete control needing no sustenance nor performing any bodily functions It symbolizes complete detachment from the world As Heinrich Zimmer commented The figure is human in shape and features yet inhuman as an icicle and thus expresses perfectly the idea of successful withdrawal from the round of birth and death, personal cares, individual destiny, desires sufferings and events "*

The image symbolizes the aspirations of every true Jain It is small wonder then, that this statue should have inspired more examples like itself One of them was set up in Karkal in A.D 1432 It is about 12 5 metres high and was taken up to its position on top of the hillock by a train of twenty carts equipped with steel wheels and drawn along an inclined plane In A.D 1604, Timaraja, the ruler of Punjalikye Rajya and who was, incidentally, a descendant of the famous Chamundaraya, the creator of Gommateshvara, installed an image which is about 12 6 metres high Both the statues are set on hills of some prominence and despite their formalism are impressive, commanding "respectful attention by their enormous mass and expression of respectful serenity " In recent decades a few more such figures have been set up in different parts of India

No one knows when the earliest images of the Jina came to be made.

But it is quite certain that some of the places where Mahavira had rested during his wanderings, became centres of pilgrimage, specially as the monks began to take refuge there during their wanderings. Many of these places were in Magadha, modern Bihar

Later, as the *munis* emerged in different parts of the country, and monasteries grew and shrines were built, the need for icons arose, to put before the populace

And thus an iconography emerged, in which the figure of the world-denier is always the main image, though other Tirthankaras, or apostles appear

Ostensibly, the symbols which had been *Dhyanamantras* before any concrete images were made, were from the fourteen dreams of Mahavira's mother, Trisala.

These symbols and others took shape from the warmth of love and adoration of the lay followers for the Jina and originated the mythology which was to proliferate In time the Jains accepted quite a few of the Vedic deities or their stances such as the Yakshi figures of the Karnataka tradition

Of course, the intensity of pre-occupation of the most devoted followers led to two major schools of interpreters—the Digambaras who insist on following every word and gesture of the Jina, and except the most extreme austerities to achieve perfection, while the Shvetambaras concede to the laity some of the human frailties which make strict adherence to the teachings of the world-shaker difficult, thus making symbolic limitations of the supreme denier possible in concrete expressions.

As the survival of the Jain monks during the centuries was difficult, among the majority, because of their non-acceptance of Vedic-Hindu tradition, it seems that they were often many non-Jains who were driven to the search for purity, away from the decay of the major Vedic faith It is not extraordinary, therefore, that there is a legend of the conversion of some kings to the gospel of the Jina For instance, King Srenika of Magadha was converted by his queen, Celana (an aunt of Mahavira). And it is known that his capital Rajgriha became an important centre for Jain assemblies. This phase was ended when Srenika's son, Ajatashatru, usurped the throne and adopted Buddhism as his faith. Soon, however, the Nanda Dynasty replaced the Ajatashatru line in about 324 B.C. and Jainism was preferred.

Chandragupta Maurya, who removed the Nandas, is said to have become a disciple of the Jain guru, Bhadrabahu, and is rumoured to have gone with his preceptor to Karnataka at the end of his life and become a mendicant. There are some inscriptions in the area around Shravana Belgola which support this myth But as the third of the Mauryas, Ashoka, accepted Buddhism, the Jain movement outward from Magadha led to the faith becoming known in all the lands on the caravan routes, eastwards in Orissa and the western country of Saurashtra and Gujarat, as also in the Dravida lands of the Deccan, in the post-Ashokan periods

And, though the Sakas and Sythians and Kushans, who moved into the northwest from the Central Asian bowl, were inclined to Buddhism which then seems to have been flourishing in Gandhara, Mathura became an important centre of the Jains between 100 B. C and A D. 100, and Valabhi in Saurashtra.

◄ 3 Pada-puja *or worship of the feat of Lord Gommateshvara. Ordinarily, the images of gods are bathed and worshipped every day but the collosal size of this statue makes it impossible to conduct this ritual Thus, only the feet of the statue are worshipped daily and the full figure is lustrated once in every 12 or 15 years at a time when there is a favourable conjunction of planets.*

It is likely that the emigration of Bhadrabahu, and Chandragupta Maurya, to Shravana Belgola, encouraged many monks to walk to Karnataka But the emergence of the Ganga kings in this area, specially through the influence of the Digambara monk, Simhanandi, who had put Madhava Kongunivarma on the throne in A D. 265, increased the influence of the Jains in this area

The spread of this faith in the Ganga kingdom may have been encouraged by the legends of the occult powers of Simhanandi The angels always won victories over the demons in those times And a pious ascetic who conferred his patronage on a king possessed secret knowledge which could transform evil into good The words which a sage spoke were revelation for the masses The death of death, through the consecration the Ganga king's right to live may have been against the Jina's truth, but their patronage gave shelter to the much respected, as also the much despised extremists, the Digambaras, who observed no caste, and spoke of the ultimate freedom which was difficult even for the gods to attain

The Gangas got built many temples and accepted the tenets which Simhanandi had laid down for his protege, Madhava Curiously, they practised *Ahimsa* by eating only vegetarian food, and *himsa* because the sage had exhorted them never to run away from a battlefield. In the reversals of the human psyche to accept contraries, however, it is known that the sin of violence may be excused, since he who becomes god may also put life out of life through love turned hate The cleft mind cannot unite before it attains freedom for itself from the tornness. The Jina had made *himsa* into original sin: Freedom was to be gained at the end, after all the battles had been faught, and regained always from the lost liberty

The greatest image of Jain art was, in fact, carved out under Chamundaraya, a general of the Gangas, who was entitled 'Ocean of true insights' by the Jains The monument of Bahubali in Shravana Belgola, seems thus to have become a model of the hero, who is both victim and victimiser, the man who killed many men, but became at the end as a sinner redeemed

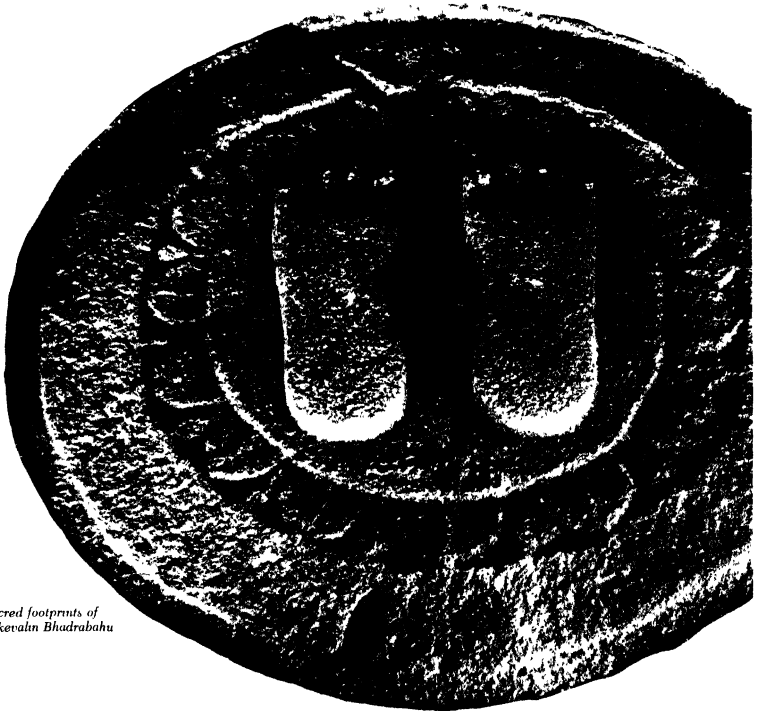
There is another legend which illustrates the sublimation of violence in despair and thus to end the anguish of the killer It is told that a monk named Sudatta was going in a procession with a local chieftain called Sala Suddenly they saw a tiger before them The monk gave the chieftain his staff and shouted – Poy(strike), Sala. The chieftain struck the beast and killed it. And this event inspired Poysala to found the Jain kingdom Hoysala

The transference of contrary wills in the worldly life was, in fact, part of the sacred history in which the symbolic fight of angels and monsters dramatised the struggle between good and evil The serpent in Jain myth becomes a worm Life, which is a postponement of death, and makes men and women born slaves, ends in the freedom of timelessness The tree of life has to be cut down and to be replaced by an idol, which must be purified daily through generations, so that the pollutions of the worshippers can also be dissolved by anology and the masses emerge into the hope of liberation.

This magical ideas of separation from anxiety, to attain release from the ties which hold one back from the ideal being, and the ideal whose example puts the worshipper at the beginning of the struggle in the every-day life, is the paradoxical inspiration behind all Jain art – a superfluity from the point of view of the doctrine, but resolving within itself all the moral and religious fervours as well as vague sentiments and feelings, in fixed images of the legendary holy men and women, who lived the idea of freedom and died for it, and thus became examples of perfection to mankind.

– MULK RAJ ANAND

The Pilgrim's Path
at Shravana Belgola

In the evanascent stillness of dawn
there was scarcely anyone about
in the village,
the streets were quiet
and still slumbering;
only an occasional window
glowed with lamplight.

The sacred footprints of Shrutakevalin Bhadrabahu

1. Indragiri Hill and the Kalyani Tank
When a pious pilgrim visited the sacred place at Shravana Belgola, he was wonderstruck and enchanted with the beauty of the spot. He exclaimed, "Oh, is it a pond of milk or panacea? Or is it one of the rivers whether Ganga, Tungabhadra or Mangalagauri? Or is it Vrindavana or Viharopavana? Oh, look how wonderful is this Tirtha!"
—a sixteenth century inscription at Shravana Belgola.

2. Jain holy men and pilgrims walking up the Indragiri Hill for darshan of Lord Gommateshwara.

The quietude of the early morning was broken by the sounds of *shehnai* and the drums playing *mangalgeet*. This was a daily event in the temple to wake gods and men, and greet the auspicious beginning of another day.

Nestling between two hills, the town owes its name to the two distinctive features associated with the larger hill, the image of Gommateshvara upon its summit and the pool of water at its base. The term Shravana Belgola, a conjunction of two words, translates as the naked ascetic and the white pond. Now a beautiful stepped tank with a crenellated wall and ornamental gateways, this pond must have once been a shimmering sheet of water between the boulder-covered twin hills set amid lush green countryside with its paddy fields and groves of coconut and areca palms.

The way up to the top of the Indragiri Hill lay over the barren hillside, its expanse unrelieved by boulders or any growing thing. The ascent rose steeply and finally led into the entrance of a stone enclosure encircling the upper slopes of the hill. The scene here was less stark, large uneven boulders and temples enlivened the dull monotony of the smooth hard rock.

We continued past the Odegal Basti, picturesquely buttressed by solid stone planks and the Chaturvimshati Basti — a devotional in stone by pilgrims from Rajasthan.

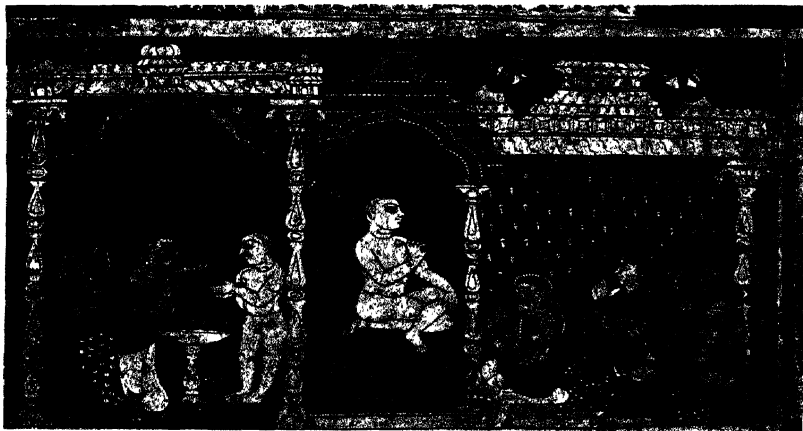
The crisp morning light cast long shadows on the stony ground as we walked towards the Tyagada Pillar and up the steps to the Akhanda Bagilu — the unbroken doorway — with its flanking shrines and the rock wall where were carved row upon row of Jina figures. We stepped through the doorway, and slowly mounted the high steps to the covered landing. From there the stairway angled up to the summit terminating at the portal of the outer courtyard of the Gommateshvara temple, the walls of which were painted with red and white stripes.

As we entered the open air temple we felt the breathtaking impact of the colossus, its size magnified by proximity. After the first fleeting glimpse we had of the statue's head while approaching the hill, we had lost sight of the image until this moment when we were confronted by the totality of the whole conception. It was truly awe-inspiring.

Subdued in the presence of greatness, we sat in the open courtyard listening to the prayer chant as the priest conducted the *pada-puja*, pouring libations of water, milk and sandalwood on the feet of this gigantic image. The figure, nude and standing upright, was in *Kayotsarga* pose, a yogic stance where the body is under total control. The statue was of heroic proportions and fashioned with a feeling for details, the hands and feet were carved with care. It was, however, the face with its deeply contemplative expression that epitomised the true Jina — the one who was immovable, withdrawn from all desires and emotions. He stood impassive, devoid of all in sublime serenity.

After the *puja* we went around the circumambulatory passage of the open air temple offering worship to the twenty-four Tirthankaras and other gods and goddesses all carved ornately in black stone.

Before starting on the circumambulation of the outer courtyard we stopped to pay homage to the image of Gullakayyaji — the poor old lady whose form Goddess Kushmandini had assumed to subdue Chamundaraya's arrogance, for Chamundaraya - the man who had commissioned the statue - was filled with pride at his splendid achievement. Certain spots, motifs and monuments on the hill are associated specifically with Chamundaraya. Outside the larger courtyard, for example, there was a huge boulder upon which were the imprints of Chamundaraya's feet. It is claimed that he stood there for so long and so many days watching work progress

3, 4. *Shri Elacharya Muni Vidyanandji, His Holiness Bhattaraka Charukirtiji of Shravana Belgola and other ascetics of the Jain faith present at the* **pada-puja** *of Lord Gommateshvara*

5 Ahardan *Panel wall-painting Jain Matha Shravana Belgola*

6 Ahardan *the ritual, of giving food to a Jain monk There is very little change in the performance of this ritual as can be observed from a scene on the same subject painted about two hundred years ago*

7 *Believed to be the portrait of Chamundaraya, the military general of the Ganga kings who commissioned the carving of the huge statue of Lord Bahubali*

on the statue that his feet made indentations on the rock. Another motif connected with Chamundaraya was the little relief sculpture of a horse-rider — supposedly his portrait — on the pillar of the pavilion covering the stairway from the summit to the Akhanda Bagilu. Further down, we came to the Tyagada Pillar which marked the place from where Chamundaraya made daily payments in gold, weight for weight of the stone chipped away while carving the image

A *pujari* informed us that owing to his many good deeds Chamundaraya was superior to other mortals and could construct a pillar which did not touch the ground and proved the point by passing a thin piece of cloth under the pillar The more skeptic among us had other explanations to offer for this astonishing phenomenon

At this point in our descent down the hill we branched off from the route taken while coming up the hill Turning left we went towards the stone *mandapa* and the Channana Basti with its *manasthambha* From there we descended along a path which brought us down outside the village from where we began our circumambulation around the hill reciting prayers and *mantras* as we went along

We returned to the town and its morning bustle The housewives had swept the area in front of their homes and on the wet ground drawn auspicious designs in white powder These diagrams were large and small, simple as well as complicated, but no two of them were alike We stopped to ask the meaning of them and why they were different but received only smiles for an answer

Preparations were being made for the *ahardan*, offering of food, to the Jain monk who was in temporary residence at Shravana Belgola To serve food to a Jain monk is considered to be an act of great merit The Digambara Jain monk, having renounced everything in life, possesses nothing, wears no clothes and sleeps on a plank, eats food from the hollow of his hands examining every morsel for impurities and observing total silence during the meal The entire procedure - of inviting the monk to partake food, the serving of different items and the sequence in which they are offered – is almost ritualistic in the systematic manner in which it is performed, and the solemnity that surrounds it

The Bhandari Basti, the largest temple in the town, was situated within a high-walled courtyard As we went through its pillared *mandapas* we could hear the monotonous incantations of a long *puja* in progress It was being performed by a husband and wife seated opposite one another and taking turns to offer an *arghya*, and reciting a sacred *shloka* to go with it In a far corner a young woman was fully absorbed in the ritual of arranging little heaps of rice grains in a pre-determined pattern and then tracing a tantric diagram from those heaps Very gradually, the twenty-four Tirthankaras, images sculpted in black stone and standing in one row assumed concrete shape in the dim interior of the temple It was indeed a grandly conceived scheme, and very effective, too, for, the images whether seen singly or collectively were superb artistic creations — forever beautiful

It was time for lunch when we finished our prayers and *puja* at the Bhandari Basti We went to the *matha* dining area where a meal was available to all pilgrims without any discrimination of class or creed All of us sat on the floor, in a line along the walls of the dining hall and ate simple wholesome fare with relish Seated across us was a large group of people from Rajasthan, obviously on a pilgrimage of the shrines in the south A family from the Punjab was also there, it consisted of representatives from all generations — from the very old to an infant in arms And then there were the newly-weds, the shy bride and the protective groom, come to ask for the blessings of Lord Gommateshvara as they embarked on a new phase in their lives There was already a sense of responsibility visible on face of the groom, who until a few days ago must have been as carefree as his unmarried peers, like the bunch of chattering, laughing cyclists on a "marathon" trip through the region

We then went for the *darshan* of Bhattaraka Swami Charukirti, the religious head of Shravana Belgola Many pilgrims were present there and with all of them he struck an immediate

rapport with his winning personality and grave but pleasant demeanour A special representative from the *bhattaraka's* establishment came with us to the *matha* for the Siddhanta *darshan* — the viewing of images fashioned out of rubies, emeralds and other precious stones There were several of them, their transluscent beauty gleamed in the dim room

We spent hours in the *matha* admiring and examining the several metal images that were arranged on both sides of the sanctum sanctorum There were the beautiful icons, Tirthankara figures standing, unadorned and in deep meditation One of them, a magnificent piece, was over a thousand year old Others ranged from about A D 1500 to the present times It was the late pieces, however, that immediately arrested one's attention with their flamboyance and grandeur Apart from these there were many pieces which were used for ritual purposes and were therefore of great interest The more devout among us went to each one of them worshipping them

This *matha* was at one time the residence of the *bhattaraka* and since his position is that of a religious ruler, the walls were decorated with fresco paintings On one whole wall was featured the *Parshvanatha Charita* portraying his last birth and the nine births prior to that On the other side were scenes from the *Nagakumara Charita* And what was fascinating about these paintings, apart from their religious significance was, that they were set in eighteenth-nineteenth century Karnataka – the architecture, the costumes and jewellery, the army with its various contingents including cannon corps all belonged to that period Obviously, the artist did not think the depiction in any way anachronistic, and in the process had left a permanent picture of his times

Later, in the afternoon we proceeded to the Chandragiri hill known also as the Chikka Betta The road to it lay through the town starting from the Bhandari Basti and along the narrow uneven lane lined with several temples including the Akkana Basti Situated at the base of the boulder-strewn hill, the Akkana Basti was a poem in architecture with excellent proportions and sober cadences in its wall surfaces

The road wound around the base of the hill skirting the ponds with white water-lilies More numerous and larger in olden days than now, it was these pools of water that made the place renowned for its *shveta-sarovara* and gave it the name of Belgola We walked on the rocky terrain, and came upon the Kanchina Done, the lotus pond with large flowers and huge curling leaves After plucking a few lotuses we walked up the steady incline of the hill encountering many pilgrims on the way A high protective stone wall ran around the plateau

on which were built several *bastis*, some of them rather plainly austere, others more ornamental and truly fine pieces of architecture

Walking on this hill was like sacrilege, for, one was treading on rock surface which was covered with sacred symbols. Most of them were epitaphs inscribed on the stone Occasionally they took the form of footprints carved on the rock surface Some of them had eroded with time and the wear and tear inflicted by the pilgrims shuffling over them Although Shravana Belgola is known for the Gommateshvara statue atop the Indragiri hill, it is the hill of Chandragiri which is the more holy to the pilgrim For him its importance dates back to the third century B C when Shrutakevalin Bhadrabahu, the last pontiff in the line started by Tirthankara Mahavira himself, foresaw a famine overtaking the land of Magadha and moved southwards with twelve thousand followers When they came to this hill, Bhadrabahu, realising that his life was nearing its end and wishing to perform *sallekhana*, instructed his followers to proceed and stayed back on this hill. With him was his disciple Chandragupta Maurya who attended upon him till the end

8 *Pilgrims returning from the hill*

9 *Jain holy men and pilgrims going to the Chandragiri Hill*

After Bhadrabahu's death, it is said that Chandragupta continued to live on the hill, served by forest deities, and worshipping the footprints of his preceptor He too, died observing *sallekhana* and ' in course of time, seven hundred *rishis* accomplished samadhi-marana here", informs a seventh-century inscription, the most ancient of all lithic writing engraved on the hill.

Because of its close association with these holy persons the Chandragiri hill itself became sacred, absorbing and imbibing, as it were, their spirituality and then radiating it More and more persons, thus, came to observe the ritual of *sallekhana* on its hallowed rocks and boulders Even if an individual performed *sallekhana* elsewhere it was not unusual for his *nishidhi*, commemorative motif or tablet, to be put here at Shravana Belgola *Nishidhis* in the form of inscriptions and footprints are found all over the rock surface of this hill while the *nishidhi* pillars are enshrined in *mandapas* or in the *basti*

Outside the enclosure on a higher slope of the hill near a grove of *champaka* trees was a low shallow cave enshrining the footprints of Bhadrabahu, the great teacher Still higher, on a peak on the same hill, were two sets of footprints—one supposedly marking the spot where Bhadrabahu meditated and the other, the *nishidhi* of Chandragupta Maurya.

On the way down we came across more *nishidhis*, and it was not a matter of surprise that this hill was known from ancient times as the Hill of Tombs. What a wonderful contrast it was then, to see the little village children laughing and shouting in glee as they went sliding down the steep lower slope of this hill

10. Devotees paying homage to holy men coming up the hill.

11-14 Jain holy men and pilgrims visiting the various temples and shrines at Chandragiri hill and meditating on its summit

11

12

15 Devi Kushmandini, the patron goddess of Shravana Belgola

It was evening, and we went to the various *bastis* in the town of Shravana Belgola for *darshan*. We lingered long in Mangayi Basti listening to the evening prayers being recited by the children of the Shravana Belgola Jain Gurukul. Seated in neat rows they sang hymns to the various Tirthankaras finishing with Gommateshvara *stutih* – a song in praise of Gommateshvara.

Some intoned and others said in chorus:
Is he of matchless beauty?
He is Cupid
Is he mighty?
He is the conqueror of Emperor Bharata
Is he liberal?
He gave back the whole earth. Even though he had conquered it
Is he free from attachment?
He is engaged in austerities. Oblivious to the world
And content with the piece of Land where he can meditate
Is he possessed of perfect knowledge?
He has destroyed the bonds of Karma. And become the first siddha
Or mokshagami *soul. Of this Cosmic Cycle*

From there we went to the *matha* where the evening *arati* was in progress. A special prayer was being said in the honour of Goddess Kushmandini, the patron goddess of Shravana Belgola, who was dressed and decorated in jewels and flowers. The temple musicians played the *shehnai* and the drums to mark the end of another day.

After the ceremonies at the *matha* many of us went to the Tyagi Nivas, to pay our respect to the monk and listen to his discourse on various subjects. Finally, tired and fulfilled, the pilgrims dispersed, going to the different *dharmashalas* to rest. And gradually the townsfolk also retired for the night. Even the village dogs stopped barking as deep darkness descended and enveloped the little town.

– SARYU DOSHI

The Three Jewels of Jain Philosophy

Although Jainism came into existence as a dialectic against the authority of the Vedas and the pseudo-spiritualism of an elaborate sacrificial system of worship, its origins go back in time, back to the first stirrings of Indian metaphysical speculation.

Jain religion is pessimistic and like Buddhism and other systems of religious thought, it believes in the Cycle of Rebirths, and consequently regards life on earth as painful, longing for liberation.

The path to liberation, the Jains believe, lies in following the path of the Three Jewels· Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. But since there can be no Right Conduct before Right Knowledge and no Right Knowledge before Right Faith one must first understand the fundamental religious, metaphysical and ethical aspects of Jain Philosophy. These are. the *Anekanta* Attitude, Jain Metaphysics and Jain Ethics.

The Anekanta Attitude

Jain Philosophy, which is based on life and experience, believes that the *Anekanta* Attitude—the many-sided approach, enables one to develop a proper perspective in life. The non-violent attitude of the Jains stems from this approach

Reality, according to the Jains, is many-sided This belief is known as *anekantavada; nayavada* and *syadvada* are its two aspects *Nayavada* declares that there are many points of view from which a thing can be looked at and that these points of view are relative. Insistence on any one point of view as the only one and absolute one will take a person away from reality. *Syadvada* is a logical consequence of *nayavada*. It deals with the various points of view from which one can look at reality comprehensively. Essentially, *syadvada* is the recognition of the fact that there is a distinct possibility of reconciling the apparent contradictions of the whole. It gives seven ways in which a thing and its attributes can be described Of these, the first three deal with the existence of a thing· of asserting it, of denying it in other contexts, and of seeing its different contexts simultaneously. For example, a building is a house if used as a residence, but it would not be a house if it is used as a godown for materials The remaining four classifications of *syadvada* deal with the indescribability of a thing. The first defines this quality, the second the existence and indescribability, the third the non-existence and indescribability, and the last the existence and non-existence combined with indescribability.

The *Anekanta* view enabled the Jains to have a spirit of tolerance towards other religions

Jain Metaphysics

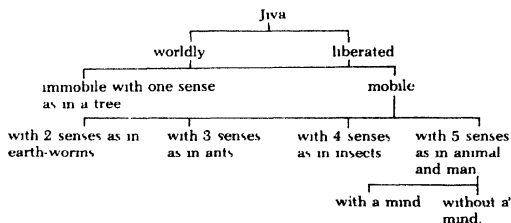
Jainism lays emphasis on the moral responsibility of an individual, and asserts, that each soul is the architect of his own destiny Man cannot depend on any Supreme Being to help him in his strivings for salvation, as there is none.

One of the basic presuppositions underlying Jain Philosophy is that the universe is made up of eternal substance which can be classified into one or the other of two co-existing and independent categories: the living—known as *jiva,* and the non-living—called *ajiva*. The *jiva* is eternal and immortal but cannot be perceived by the senses. It is neither all pervasive nor of a fixed size. At any given time its size is equal to the body it occupies. With each incarnation it enters a new body and undergoes a change in its dimensions—expanding or contracting so as to fit the body it is to inhabit, 'like the flame of a lamp whose light can fill a small room or a large hall'. By virtue of this quality the *jiva* can range in size from the smallest atom to that of the whole universe.

The *jiva* is pure and perfect: it is pure conciousness. It is also the one that experiences the fruit of *karma* It has a tendency to go upwards to the end of the universe, where it can dwell as a *siddha* without sorrow, without joy, without birth, without death, enjoying an endless unbroken calm.

Ajiva has both form and formlessness. Its form is inanimate matter known as *pudgala* which is perceptible to the touch and possesses colour, taste and smell The formless aspects of *ajiva* are *dharma* -- the principle of motion, *adharma* — the principle of rest, *akasha* — space, *kala* — time These formless aspects give *pudgala* its movement, keep it motionless, give it concrete form in space and produce physical changes of growth and decay in it.

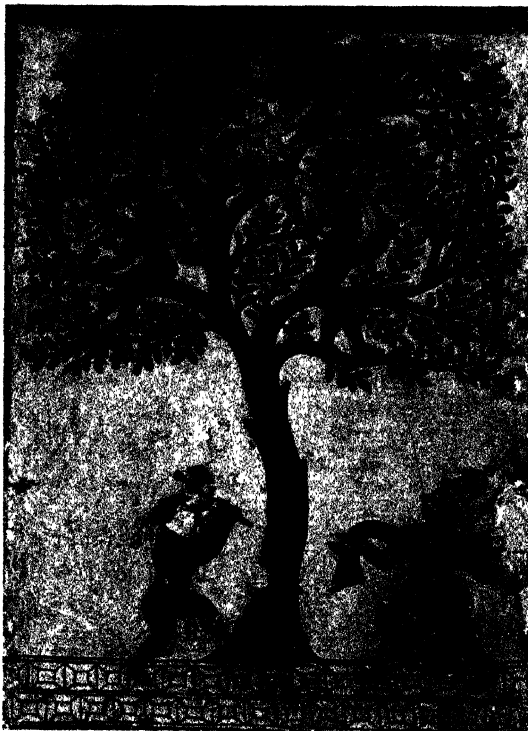
Both *jiva* and *ajiva* in all their aspects, have magnitude.

Jivas fall into two categories: the first is the liberated *jiva* that which has successfully freed itself from *samsara*, the Wheel of Rebirths The liberated *jiva* is known as *siddha* That *jiva* which is still circling endlessly in *samsara* is referred to as a *samsara jiva*, a worldly *jiva* Whenever a *samsara jiva* appears on earth it is born either as an immobile *jiva* or a mobile *jiva*. The immobile *jiva*, a tree for example, possesses only one sense — that of touch whereas a mobile jiva has one or more of the four other senses, those of taste, smell, sight, and hearing The mobile *jivas* are graded according to the number of senses they possess

Every *jiva*, according to Jainism is pure, possesses infinite knowledge, power and bliss. But this purity of the *jiva* is obscured from the very beginning because it is infected with *karma* matter. It is this *karma* that keeps the *jiva* entangled in the Wheel of Birth and Death.

The definition of *karma* in this context is that it is a substantive force capable of developing merit and demerit It consists of fine imperceptible particles of matter which stick to the *jiva* as soot to an object *Karma* matter forms a veil around the soul and hampers its progress towards self-realization and salvation. The *jiva*, through its various activities of mind, body and speech, whether good or bad, is constantly attracting *karma* matter *Karma* matter pours into the soul just as flood waters rush into a pond from all channels This influx of *karma* into the soul is known as *ashrava*. *Karma* matter not only enters the *jiva* but builds a body around it known as *karma sharira*, which never leaves it

The *jiva* itself is not devoid of certain passions such as anger, greed, pride and deceit. These passions known as *kashayas* cause the incoming *karma* to adhere to the *jiva* just as heat will unite with iron.

The tree with the six persons illustrates the six leshyas *of Jain philosophy* Leshya *(tint) is that by which the soul is tinted with merit and demerit It is of six kinds and colours, three being meritorious and three sinful Meritorious* leshyas *are of orange-red* (pita), *lotus-pink* (padma) *and white* (shukla) *colours, while sinful* leshyas *are of black* (krishna), *indigo* (nila) *and grey* (kapota) *colours The former lead respectively to birth as man and to final emancipation, while the latter lead respectively to hell and to birth as plant or animal*

The picture illustrates the acts of persons affected with the different leshyas. *With the desire of eating mangoes a person under the influence of the black* leshya *cuts the trunk of the tree, another affected with the indigo chops off big boughs; a third influenced by the grey cuts off small branches, a fourth affected with the orange-red breaks the twigs, a fifth under the influence of the lotus-pink merely plucks mangoes, and a sixth affected with the white picks up only fallen fruit*

After being absorbed into the *jiva* the *karma* matter gets transformed into any one of the eight types of *karmas*:

1. *Jnanavaraneeya:* that which obscures right knowledge;
2. *Darsanavaraneeya.* that which obscures right intuition;
3. *Vedaneeya:* arousing (affective states like) feelings and emotions;
4. *Mohaneeya.* that which deludes right faith,
5. *Ayu karma* · determining the age of the individual;
6. *Nama karma*: which produces various circumstances collectively making up an individual existence, like the body and other special qualities of individuality;
7. *Gotra karma:* which determines the family, social standing, etc. of the individual,
8. *Antaraya karma:* which obstructs the inborn energy of the soul and prevents the doing of good actions.

The duration, intensity and quantity of the *karma* matter depends upon the circumstances which cause the flow of *karma* matter into the soul For example, hostility against knowledge, rebelliousness towards learning and against those who teach, destruction of books, all contribute towards producing knowledge-obscuring *karma*.

These actions, the effects of which have been experienced by the *jiva*, result in some *karma* matter being expurgated from the soul. Now if this process could continue uninterruptedly, then all the *karma* matter could be discharged and the soul could be liberated But unfortunately this is never possible in the normal course of events. For while the old *karma* is being expiated, new *karma* is constantly being formed by the *jiva's* activities. It is virtually impossible for a *jiva* to free itself from the Cycle of Rebirths, unless an active effort is made in the direction of achieving self-realization as prescribed in the religious texts.

For the dissipation of *karma*, the Jain scriptures advocate as the first step that all channels through which *karma* flows into the soul be stopped so that no additional *karma* can accumulate This is possible by self-control and freedom from worldly attachments The practice of vows, carefulness in speaking, walking, laying down things, self-control, observance of ten kinds of *dharma* and meditation will block the inflow of *karma* and protect the *jiva* from the impurities of fresh *karma* This process of stoppage is known as *somvara*

Once all ingress of *karma* has been plugged the next step is to remove the *karma* that has been accumulating over the ages. This calls for destruction termed as *nirjara* The *karma* that remains has to be annihilated through the blaze of austerities and penance. The soul which was until now bedimmed by the dust of *karma* matter will shine like a mirror as soon as the dust has been wiped off Then, it will revert to its pure transcendental form and attain *moksha*.

Jain Ethics

For the deliverance of *jiva* from the Cycle of Rebirth the spirit must subdue matter and triumph over it The way to *moksha* is through the practice of Three Jewels Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct The belief in the fundamental principles is the Right Faith, the recognition of the real is Right Knowledge and freedom from attachment and aversion is Right Conduct The path of virtue is the path to self-realization and from there to *moksha*

Jain scriptures enjoin the practice of five *vratas*, vows. They are. *ahimsa* — non-injury, *satya* — speaking of truth, *asteya* — non-stealing, *brahmacharya* — abstinence from sexual pleasures, *aparigraha* — shunning from worldly wealth.

These vows are the same for the laity as well as the ordained persons, but differ in the degree of strictness advocated in their observance The nuns and monks must practise them much more rigorously, than the householder A householder can and may, for a limited time, practise the vows strictly to ascertain if he will be able to take up ascetic life later.

The Jain religion emphasises that individually a man is born, individually he dies and with individual effort he can free himself; there is no God or Supreme Being that can lift him to salvation. In this world of pain and sorrow individual souls must themselves struggle for emancipation and realize the true nature of the soul as the highest state of *moksha*.

— T. G KALGHATGI

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The Legend of Bahubali
the quintessence of quest and conquest

In any Jain temple the central figure of worship is that of a Tirthankara. How is it then, that the largest Jain figure in India is not a Tirthankara?

The monolithic statue atop the Vindhyagiri hill at Shravana Belgola represents Bahubali, the son of Adinatha, the first of the twenty-four Jain Tirthankaras. To the Jains he represents the first *moksha-gami* soul of this cosmic cycle and for that reason he occupies an exalted position — almost equal to that of the Tirthankara — in the Jain pantheon. Apart from that it is the story of Bahubali, his mental and physical qualities, his handsome appearance and his severe austerities that have made a deep impression on the minds and the hearts of the Jains inspiring reverence and heart-felt adoration. The universal worship of Bahubali is based thus on his individual spiritual achievement in a setting which was as great and glorious as his own personality.

He was born many aeons ago, when the cosmic-cycle was on its downward path and moving from the period of enjoyment and bliss to that of turmoil and hard work, as the son of Tirthankara Rishabha.

Rishabha was the king of Ayodhya and his mission in life was to guide mankind along the path of righteous living to salvation. He established the first social order and taught the people the various arts and crafts such as of warfare, agriculture and commerce as well as writing and artistic expression.

Rishabha had two wives, to the first were born ninety-nine sons and one daughter and to the second, one son and one daughter. After many years as a happy householder, Rishabha realizing the ephemeral nature of worldly existence left to explore, in the solitude of the forest, the potentialities of the *atma* — the soul — to attain a state of eternal peace, knowledge, spiritual power and happiness, which manifest themselves as innate properties of the soul.

Before Rishabha embarked on his spiritual quest, he appointed son Bharata, as the ruler of Ayodhya and gave son Bahubali, the principality of Podanapura.

In course of time there appeared in Bharata's armoury a *chakra-ratna* — the divine wheel — ensuring that Bharata would become a *Chakravartin*. It was an indication that Bharata should go forth to conquer the world. And so he did, The *chakra* led Bharata and his army from one kingdom to another, all the kings bowing to Bharata and accepting his suzerainty. Flushed with triumph and success, Bharata returned home but to his utter amazement the *chakra* stopped in front of the portals of his kingdom signifying that some territory remained unconquered. Bharata was perplexed but learnt from the *jyotishis* that the reason was that his brothers had not accepted his sovereignty. Bharata sent a messenger to his brothers to accept him as the *Chakravartin*. But rather than become his subjects, they decided to renounce the world, pulled out their hair, and became ascetics in their father's religious order. Only Bahubali did not join the ascetic order nor did he recognize Bharata as the *Chakravartin*. 'Why is it so', mused Bharata. 'Why should not my dear brother rejoice in my *Digvijaya*?' Bharata hit upon a solution. He bade a messenger to go to Podanapura to invite Bahubali to join the celebrations of the *Digvijaya*.

When the messenger was ushered into the audience hall of Bahubali he sought permission and conveyed that 'Bharata remembers his younger brother Bahubali with affection and wishes him to join the celebrations as a mark of obeisance so that his *Digvijaya* is complete.'

Bahubali's face creased with a frown. He replied, 'Go back to Bharata and inform him that my father gave this territory of Podanapura to me and I have no desire to bring it under the

1, 2. A painted wooden manuscript cover, patli, *featuring the battle of Bharata and Bahubali as well as Bahubali's austerities.*
This early example of miniature painting is unique in its theme and treatment of showing Bahubali as a warrior and as an ascetic.
Collection and Copyright: Kusum and Rajeya Swali

3-5. Details of Figs. 1 and 2

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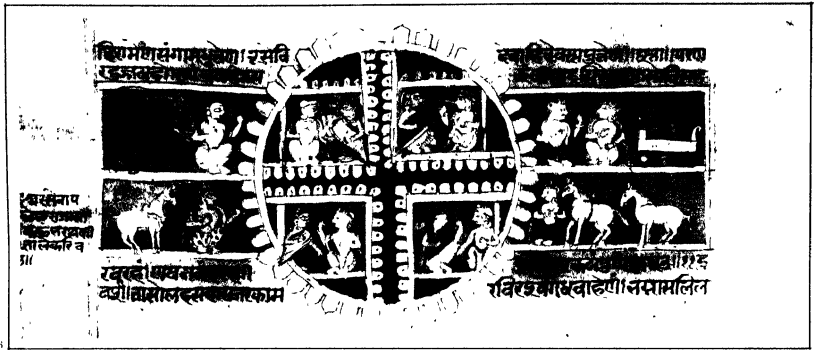
6 *Bharata's army resting outside a fortified town Folio from the* Mahapurana *painted at Palam near Delhi in A D 1540 Collection The Digambara Jain Bada Mandir, Jaipur*

7 *Rather than become subjects of Chakravarti Bharata, his ninety-eight brothers chose to pull out their hair and renounce the world to become ascetics in the religious order founded by their father Lord Rishabhadeva Folios from the* Mahapurana *painted at Palam near Delhi in A D 1540 Collection The Digambara Jain Bada Mandir, Jaipur*

8 *Bharata and Bahubali fighting in water, folio from a manuscript of the* Mahapurana, *painted c A D 1420, probably Delhi School Collection Shri Digambara Jain Naya Mandir, Old Delhi*

9 *Bahubali meditating, folio from the manuscript of the* Devasano Pado Kalpasutra *and* Kalakacharyakatha *painted towards the end of the fifteenth century at Gandhara Bandar in Gujarat Collection The National Museum New Delhi*

supremacy of any other ruler even if he be my elder brother. Does he not have a large enough empire to satisfy his great ambition? Why are his eyes turned towards this land?'

The messenger said, 'Pardon me, for I am but a humble servant, but I have seen the ways of kings. For Bharata to be a *Chakravartin* it is necessary that all accept his overlordship. He has the *chakra*, the function of which is to annihilate all opponents and he also has the *danda* — the symbol of punishment. And your presence at the court of the *Chakravartin* will enhance your position, prestige and enrich your possessions.'

Bahubali, infuriated, shouted, 'Be gone immediately. You have the impertinence to try and instil fear in me with the mention of the deadly *chakra* and powerful *danda*, and at the same time allure me with favours? Get out at once! But for your position as a messenger, I would have thrown you into the dungeon for this insolence.'

Before departing the messenger said, 'I have a word to say. King Bharata wishes to be a *Chakravartin* and desires to complete his *Digvijaya*. He will not hesitate to crush opposition with the *chakra* and *danda*.'

Bahubali said contemptuously, "Oh! what *danda* and what *chakra*! Even a potter has his wheel and his rod. Let there be war if that is what Bharata's greed and pride dictate.' Thus ended the negotiations.

The armies of the two brothers stood opposite one another in angry confrontation. The battle began, arrows flew in both directions and soldiers lay dead everywhere. The elder statesmen of both sides, unable to bear the sight, came to the centre of the battlefield and called a halt to the fighting. They appealed to the two brothers that it would be a catastrophe if the sons of a Tirthankara caused such needless bloodshed. Instead, they suggested that since the dispute for supremacy was between them — two individuals — it could be settled in the form of a duel with one another. It would be a good way to establish the winner.

Accordingly, the two brothers first went through *drishti-yuddha* — the fight of staring each other down, *jala-yuddha* — fighting in water, and lastly *malla-yuddha* — a wrestling bout. Bahubali won the first two duels and while fighting the third easily overpowered Bharata. Lifting him high, ready to dash him to the ground, Bahubali was suddenly overcome with fraternal feelings and remorse; he put his brother down gently. It was a moment of utter humiliation for Bharata and in desperation he ordered the *chakra* to attack Bahubali. The *chakra*, however, made three circles around the head of Bahubali and stood suspended. After all, Bahubali was the winner of the duels.

For Bahubali this was a moment of total disillusionment with the ways of the world. He was disgusted that greed and pride could lead to such fraternal conflicts. Without a moment's hesitation he left for the forest. While on his way to the forest Bahubali wondered:

I have turned my back
On the world of conflict,
Of passion, of hate, of anger,
Of greed, of deceit.
It hurts to think that
I should have been the epicentre,
The cause primaeval, of all this strife!
'STRIFE' did I say?

Ah, it was the very doom,
The enveloping gloom
Thickening and thickening
Around the arena.

Gleamed only the Chakra,
Standing steadfast in attendance,
To think of it is to fall.

In the bottomless crevices
To think that the Chakra was hurled
By Bharata, my brother
My elder brother
My dear elder brother
Respected and revered,

More so, in the absence of
The father Thirthankara
Adinath
Whose Samavasarana, the holy refuge
Of the afflicted
Breathes and instils peace, par excellence

Did your omniscience mirror
The events, Father?
Dart by dart —
The fiery flow of gazes
Splash by splash—
The surge of shifting walls of water
Grip by grip—
The wraps of warrior's entangled frames

How I lifted him lightly
On to my shoulders!
That was the MOMENT
Moment of what Revenge? NO!
The moment of disenchantment,
And of deliverance!
That was the point
Of the parting of the ways
That was the moment of final victory
And of final defeat
That was the moment when Cosmos
Shrank into the size of a peanut
And Space vanished
Into the haze of a vapour!
Though I laid him down
Ever so gently
On the ground,
My humility prided in
The pinnacle of power it had mounted

What made my brother accept, I wonder
The three contests
Of foregone conclusions?
My build my power, my prowess
Were there for all to see
The invincible army of the Chakravartin
Was there, too for all to see
Denying him the use of his unmatched
power
On the battle-field,
Granting me the use of my superior might
In combat, face to face,
Was destiny's way of
Inflicting a cruel joke
Methinks, Bharata could have said
NO!
To the chagrin of the
Old wise ministers of
The warring camps
Who joined hands to champion
The cause —
Not of Bharata, nor of me, Bahubali,
But of Thirthankara Adinath, our father
Whose sermon of non-violence
Would have lain bleeding mortally
Under the clank of swords
And the trample of tuskers!

So what?
War being war,
My brother could have said 'NO'.
But he did not

The scales stood heavily tilted
Against him
The dice stood heavily loaded,
Favouring me

I clashed,
And clashed,
And clashed
To humble him down
I used my strength
Shamelessly
To vent his fury
He summoned his Chakra
Aggresively
Safe in the thought, perhaps,
That I could not smother him
Safe in the thought, perhaps,
That he could not obliterate me—
The two, in whose veins flows
The blood of the Tirthankara,
The two, whose cheeks
Are washed with the same
Salt of tears,
In shared remorse

When I lifted him aloft the shoulders,
When he hurtled his Chakra on me,
That was the moment
Of the dawning of the Truth!
'It is not the futility of the act
But the multiple injury of the intent
That is violence

To atone for the sin,
To light a lamp,
In the dark recesses of the mind,
I now seek the solitude of the forest
I long for the light that will defy
The glory glitter of the Chakra
The light that will cover in effulgence
Not only the mind and the heart
But will also dispel the crafty darkness
That shelters itself
Under the base of the lighted lamp
Under the two bare-feet
That will be compelled to occupy
The land that belongs to the Chakravartin
Will the Light also be his gift?
Only the father Tirthankara—
The omniscient one—
KNOWS

In the forest Bahubali pulled out his hair and assumed the *kayotasarga* pose of the Jain ascetic He stood still in total meditation, so much so that creepers wound themselves around his arms and legs, anthills sprang up at his feet, and birds nested in his hair and beard In spite of all this severe self-mortification he did not attain *kevalajnana*

Perturbed at Bahubali's condition, Bharata and his two sisters enquired of their Tirthankara father the impediment to Bahubali's acquiring *kevalajnana* Through his omniscience Tirthankara Adinatha informed them that the reason was resentment on Bahubali's part, the thought that he had to stand on Bharata's land rankled within him Adinatha said to Bharata, 'Go and offer homage to the meditating *muni*'

Thereupon Bharata and his two sisters went to the forest The two sisters pulled away the creepers that had grown around him and whispered, 'Dismount from the elephant, Oh Revered Brother!' For the first time Bahubali's perception opened itself to the spoken word Whose voice was it? What elephant is it talking about, wondered Bahubali In a flash he understood that the elephant alluded to was the elephant of pride And when Bharata paid obeisance to him, his act of affection and humility dissolved all resentment within Bahubali Immediately he attained the state of *kevalajnana* and thereafter *moksha* The ultimate conquest had been made, the quest was complete

—L C JAIN

Shravana Belgola
in legend and history

For over two thousand years, Shravana Belgola has been not only an important holy place of the Jains but continued to remain so—a distinction few historical or pilgrimage centres can claim Many legends and literary works describe its antiquity, but these cannot be substantiated by historical facts and details. It is only after the seventh century that reliable information about the place is forthcoming However, inscriptions and legends clearly indicate that because of its enchanting natural setting, serene and tranquil atmosphere, the place was conducive to penance and austerities and was sought after by ascetics, teachers and pupils of the Jain faith from as early as the third century B C.

According to the Digambara Jain tradition the legend of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya signifies the migration to south India of the last Shrutakevalin teacher along with his disciple king. This legend receives mention in the earliest extant record engraved on the rock near the Parshvanatha Basti on the Chandragiri hill at Shravana Belgola. This inscription, assignable to sixth/seventh century A D., on paleographic grounds, registers the death of a Jain ascetic, Prabhachandra, by *samadhi*. It states: 'Bhadrabahusvami, of a lineage rendered illustrious by a succession of great men who came in regular descent from the venerable supreme *rishi*, Gautama-ganadhara, his immediate disciple, Loharya, Jambu, Vishnudeva, Aparajita, Govardhana and other teachers', being 'acquainted with the true nature of the eight-fold great omens and a seer of the past, the present and the future, having learnt from an omen and foretold in Ujjayani a calamity lasting for a period of twelve years, the entire *samgha* (Jaina community) set out from the north to the south and reached by degrees a country consisting of many hundreds of villages and filled with happy people, wealth, gold, grain, and herds of cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep' The inscription then mentions that an *acharya*, Prabhachandra by name, accomplished *samadhi* In the statement noted above, it is indicated that the country to which they came comprised of *janapadas* and villages, suggesting that the land around Shravana Belgola was quite populous and prosperous as compared to the country from which they hailed

Although the interpretation of this inscription has aroused much controversy particularly in the identification of Bhadrabahu and Prabhachandra, it is now widely accepted that the Bhadrabahuswami of the legend and the inscription are one and the same person—the Shrutakevalin and his disciple Prabhachandra in all likelihood Chandragupta, the Mauryan King. Incidentally the inscriptional reference to Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta reveals that by the seventh century A D., the tradition that Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta had lived on Chandragiri or the Chikkabetta at Shravana Belgola and had accomplished *samadhi* there, had taken deep roots. Also, because of its close association with Chandragupta Maurya, the smaller of the two hills came to be known as Chandragiri.

The story is again recounted in Digambara Jaina literature, especially in *Bhadrabahucharite* of Ratnanandi (dated about A D 1450) and *Rajavalikatha* of Devachandra (dated about A.D. 1840) testifying to the popularity and continuance of the legend for more than a thousand years.

The migration of Bhadrabahu, Chandragupta and great *acharyas* like Aristanemi and Vishakhacharya to the south, helped to spread Jainism in south India. With Shravana Belgola as the epicentre of intellectual and religious activity, the Jain missionaries moved to Chola and Pandya *deshas* especially under Vishakhacharya who was, on completion of the mission, welcomed back.

After Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta, we hear of another great ascetic Kundakundacharya by name associated intimately with Shravana Belgola. A number of inscriptions refer to this

great preceptor and author as the most profilic proponent of Jainism in south India He is also accredited with activating the *mula-samgha* and its various *ganas* and is claimed to have attained the power, by his arduous and eminent character, of moving in the air An inscription of third century A D gives his name also as Padmanandi. Unfortunately, the date of this *acharya* is not yet determined Modern scholars place him somewhere between second and fourth century A.D There are yet others who assign him to the beginning of the Christian era

Another inscription on the same hill dated about A D 650, mentions that a 'great *acharya* named Aristanemi, belonging to a *samgha* which came to the South under the leadership of great *acharya* (name defaced) after giving up the whole group (*gana*) and food, mounting the hill *Katavapra* liberated himself through *shukladhyana* attaining perfection King Dindika was present there as witness' The use of the word *Katavapra* refers specially to the Chikkabetta or Chandragiri, the smaller of the two hills and is translated as the 'Hill of Tombs' It may be noted here that during the seventh century A D this place sanctified by Bhadrabahu had come to be regarded as suitable for *samadhimarana* for the Jains and had become renowned as a holy *tirtha* *Katavapra* is thus equivalent to *samadhigudda* in Kannada and its reference is continued to the small hill Sometimes the term Belgola or Velgola is also employed in the inscriptions of the seventh century A D In all probability the term Belgola refers to the town or village proper while *katavapra* denotes the small hill The term Belgola or Velgola means 'fair-lake' which possibly refers to the pond at the foot of the Vindhyagiri hill near the town This view is supported by other words like *dhavalesaras*, *svetasaras*, meaning white lake or fair lake These words also occur in the inscriptions of this place. The intimate association of the fair lake or white lake with *shramanas*, Jain ascetics, suggested the name as Shramana Belgola or Shravana Belgola for this place

The information on Shravana Belgola and the important personalities connected with it after Kundakundacharya from the early centuries of Christian era till about the beginning of the ninth century A D is rather meagre Evidently, the intervening period seems to have been one of turmoil and warfare among the lesser chieftains to gain power The Ganga inscriptions in and around Shravana Belgola reflect this situation Nevertheless, it may be surmised that by about the seventh century A D , in Karnataka, the region around Shravana Belgola was under the political hegemony of the Gangas of Talakad, who had acknowledged the sovereignty of the Chalukyas of Badami and later of the Rashtrakutas and of the Kalyani Chalukyas

The earliest Ganga record is a Kannada label inscription near the Chandranatha Basti on the Chikkabetta stating that the *Basadi* is of Sivamara, who is identified with Ganga King Sivamara II (c A D 800) But this identification is questionable as the Chandranatha Basti is stylistically assignable to not earlier than tenth century A D and the record, on paleographic grounds, to the ninth century A D The only record of the Gangas that can be precisely dated is that written in the 15th regnal year of King Satyavakya Permanadi who may be identified with Ganga Rachamalla II (A. D 870-919) This puts the date of the record to A D. 884-885

It is not necessary for us to consider the details of the political history of Gangas, who were intimately associated with Shravana Belgola, suffice it to note that the members of Ganga dynasty were greatly devoted to the Jain faith

The most illustrious person of this period is Chamundaraya, the minister of Ganga Marasimha II and Rachamalla IV He combined in himself the best of the qualities of heroism, learning and devotion, the last one expressed through his determination to carve out the greatest

standing monolithic statue from natural rock, blending nature with the universe Six inscriptions record Chamundaraya's connection with Shravana Belgola. He is renowned for the erection of the colossus Gommata or Bahubali, on the Vindhyagiri in Shravana Belgola

There are several interesting accounts about how Chamundaraya conceived and caused the colossus to be carved on the Vindhyagiri hill These accounts are in the form of inscriptions and literary works like *Bhujabalicharite* (A D 1614) and *Rajavalikathe* (A D 1840) A twelfth-century inscription composed by Boppana Pandita identifies Gommata with Bahubali or Bhujabali and states that he was the son of Puru and the younger brother of Bharata. There was a struggle between the two which resulted in Bahubali resigning his claims and retiring from the world in order to do penance. He became a *kevalin* and attained such eminence by his victory over *karma* that Bharata erected at Podanapura his image 525 bow-lengths in height, which came to be known as *Kukkuteshvara* In course of time the image became invisible to all except the initiated. But Chamundaraya, having heard a description of it, set out with the desire of seeing it Finding, however, that the journey was beyond his power, he resolved to erect such an image himself, and by his own efforts succeeded in getting this statue of Gommata sculpted and consecrated

The account in the *Bhujabalicharite* is substantially similar to some variations in details

A different version is given in the *Rajavalikathe* Starting the account with eulogy of the prowess and valour of Chamundaraya, it goes on to state that his mother hearing it read in the *Adipurana* that in Podanapura there was an image of Bahubali Deva, 525 bows in height, was filled with a desire to see it Chamundaraya with his mother Kalika Devi, set forth to see it, vowing not to taste milk or fruit until they did They went by marches, attended by their forces, and at each camping-ground where they halted they set up a Jinalaya Thus they arrived at the hill which bore the *nishidhi* of Bhadrabahu Swami On that night Padmavati Devi appeared in a dream to both mother and son and said, "You will not be able to go to Podanapura Here, on the larger hill, is a stone image of Gommata Jina, which was worshipped by Rama and Ravana and seen by Mandodari. It is covered up with stones, Purify yourselves, and going to the rock on the smaller hill, shoot an arrow to the south, when, before the sound dies away, the image will rise and appear" At sunrise on the morning after that dream, on shooting an arrow as directed, the image of Bhujabali Yati, which had been hidden by stones, appeared, and proved to be of the height of 13 men

Erecting a platform round it and building *Chaityalayas*, Chamundaraya, having collected coconut milk and the five-nectars, performed the final anointing four separate times But the anointing liquid would not descend lower than the navel, Being greatly distressed by it, he besought all the priests there to perform the anointing Still the liquid would not go below the navel At this moment Kushmandini Devi presented herself in the form of an old woman, with a little drop of milk in the shell of half a white *gulla kayi* fruit and said, "Let my faith be tried" (by anointing the image with the milk she had brought), whereon they all derided her. But some of the priests, taking her offering, poured it on the head of the image, when, instantly, it ran down all over the image and covered the hill and town, whence the town was named Belgula, from the white *gulla* fruit.

All accounts agree in stating that it was the story of the gigantic image at Podanapura that led Chamundaraya to have the colossus at Shravana Belgola made The inscriptions at the side of the colossal image makes it clear that Chamundaraya had it made. There is a general consensus of opinion that the year of consecretion of the statue is A.D 981.

We have already noted that inscriptions of Shravana Belgola identify Gommata with Bahubali The use of the term Gommata for Bahubali seems to be peculiar to Karnataka and as such need a little explanation. There has been great deal of discussion about the derivation of this term Gommata and it is now generally accepted that the meaning of the word is beautiful In fact Bahubali is described as Manmatha or Kamadeva in literary works like *Purvapurana* and *Adipurana* This is borne out by the Gudnapur inscription of Kadamba Ravivarman (*c.* A. D 485-519) which refers to a *Kamajinalaya* as an abode for Manmatha and evidently implying a temple enshrining Bahubali Incidentally, this inscription not only takes the worship of Bahubali to the sixth century A.D but also indicates that Manmatha is the original term from which Gommata must have been derived

Another explanation for this term can be the belief that Chamundaraya himself was called Gommata or Gommataraya It was customary in south India from the sixth century onwards, if not earlier to name the shrine or the main image after the patron king or chief who commissioned it Several such examples exist the *Kailasanatha* temple at Kanchi erected by Pallava Rajasimha is named after and referred to in the inscriptions as Rajasimheshwara, the temple built by Pallava Mahendravarman II as Mahendravarmeshwara, that built by Raja Raja Chola at Thanjavur as Rajarajeshwara, and that built by Chalukya queen Lokamahadevi at Pattadakal as Lokamahalaya In keeping with this tradition, it is likely that the colossus erected by Chamundaraya was named Gommateshwara from Gommata

From the time of Chamundaraya, the use of this term Gommata or Gommateshwara for Bahubali seems to have become quite a common feature in Karnataka Apart from the Gommateshwara at Shravana Belgola two more colossal images of Gommata are known, both from South Kanara district of Karnataka, one at Karkala (about 13 m high) and the other at Venur or Enur (about 11 m high) set up in A D 1432 and A D 1604 respectively An earlier representation of Bahubali occurs in the rock-cut cave of Chalukyas of Badami at Badami datable to seventh/eighth century A D

Literary reference in the *Rajavalikathe* to the head-anointing ceremony or *Mahamastakabhisheka* of the Bahubali or Gommata performed by Chamundaraya and the incident of his having been humbled by Kushmandini appearing in the form of Gullakayajji, has already been noted Evidently, the ceremony has been a very important event right from the very beginning The earliest known ceremony on record took place in A D 1398 and from then onwards this great event seems to be taking place periodically. Graphic descriptions of the *Mahamastakabhisheka* for Gommateshwara at Shravana Belgola occur in numerous literary works. At least two Kannada texts of seventeenth/eighteenth century A.D. describe the auspicious and great event Of these, the description given by Anantakavi in his *Gommateshwaracharite* (*c* A D 1780) deserve a special mention as he tries to recapture the grandeur of the function vividly and visualizes the same as taking place in the presence of Chamundaraya. The poet devotes the entire fourth chapter or *Sandhi* of his work to the description of the event of which a brief account is given below.

Beautiful damsels carried milk, curds, ghee, fruits, coconut and sugar, in large baskets (*hedige*) to the summit of the hill. While different types of crackers and fire works were being ignited several auspicious musical instruments were being played and amidst the light of hundreds of torches (*divatige*), the damsels took also various kinds of flowers, perfumes and fruits to the hill top Women dressed in a variety of apparel and decorated with ornaments carried 1008 shining metal pots (*kalashas*) full of scared water, on to the hill and placed them on heaps of rice near the Bahubali image. The congregation of people applauded with *jayaghoshas* The Indras (priests of Jaina temples), after duly worshipping the Kalashas, and saluting the

pontiffs, sought permission for the commencement of the anointing ceremony Having obtained the permission, the Indras, chanting the relevant *mantras* worshipped Jina, and the ablution (*abhishekha*) started The water poured over the head of the Bahubali image sprinkled around and covered the entire hill People standing on the specially built *attale* (scaffolding) collected water filled *kalashas* from persons standing below, while returning the empty ones The kettle-drums sounded, several bells jingled, music and dance by courtesans (*ganikas*) were performed, at different places.

Baskets full of grated coconut kernel were emptied over the head of the image of Jina. Then again, slices of banana fruit, sugar, ghee, seeds of pomegranate and milk, were poured and several types of *diparatis* were offered.

Different kinds of flowers, scented water curds and other substances were poured over Lord Jina and the image of Bahubali shone with a new lustre Then again thousands of metal pots full of scented water were emptied over the image and *abhishekha* with pure water was performed After the completion of the *abhishekha* a curtain was drawn across the image and was decorated with garlands of flowers

With the sun setting in the west, thousands of stars appeared in the sky But the torches (*divatige, hilalu, panju*) lit near the hill far exceeded the number of stars in the sky. The crackers and other fire-works that were ignited during that time gave a celestial touch to the occasion Then the curtain was unveiled and several preparations of cooked rice like *paramanna* (cooked rice mixed with sugar and milk), *ajyanna* (cooked rice mixed with ghee), *chitranna, amritanna* (cooked rice mixed with milk) and other sweetmeats were offered to Bahubali

Meanwhile the sun rose in the east and the pontiffs and the *Shravakas* (the lay worshippers of Lord Jina) uttered cries of joy *Ratnadarati* (waving a lamp bedecked with jewels) was offered and the ceremony was concluded with *Shantidhara*

Chamundaraya praised the *Kantuhara* (Bahubali) with utmost reverence. The Indras adored the *Shrutakevalins* and the congregated *bhavyajanas* sung the glories of Lord Bahubali The image of Bahubali was adorned with ornaments bedecked with the nine jewels (*navaratnas*) and then the eight-fold (*astavidha*) *archanas* were performed. The throned pontiffs — Charukirti, Lakshmisena, Devendrasuri, Ganandandi, respectively were honoured

As a part of the anointing ceremony, Chamundaraya donated a seat (*pitha*) decorated with five types of pearls, sandles, and *kamandalu*, etc, to Charukirtimuni. He honoured with due tributes the then contemporary poets and scholars. Oil-bath was caused to the beautifully carved Brahmadeva image. Different types of oblations were offered and the image was unveiled. Every one of the congregation prostrated to Lord Gommateshwara and several coconuts were broken as a part of worship The attendant deities and the *Yakshas* were also worshipped.

Amidst the light of numerous torches, crackers, and the fire-works, people proceeded down the hill. The saints and the royal personages walked in the main roads named after the Sun and the Moon and reached the *matha* in the town Chamundaraya who caused the statue to be erected and who performed the great anointing ceremony, was praised by one and all

Shravana Belgola, continued to receive attention from the later Ganga rulers, although political conditions were somewhat unsettled during the tenth-eleventh centuries A.D. Being staunch followers of the Jina, they were invariably associated with the development of Shravana Belgola making it a renowned centre of Jainism and an important seat of traditional learning

The revival of Jainism at Shravana Belgola, started under the Gangas, was turned into a Golden Age by the Hoysalas Many members of the royal household and feudatories evinced keen interest and devotion in constructional and religious activities at Shravana Belgola and the other centres in the neighbourhood There are nearly fifty inscriptions of the Hoysala period at Shravana Belgola, but these do not throw any light on the political events They however, give details about some generals and officials under the Hoysala kings who were devout Jains including their kith and kin who were devotees

Of the Hoysala kings, generals and officials, special mention may be made of the munificence of Shantaladevi, the famous queen of Vishuvardhana, mentioned in several inscriptions She was responsible among other acts of devotion, for the construction of the Savatigandhavarana Basti While Laxmimate, wife of Gangaraja, built the Eradukatte Basti, in A.D. 1118 Gangaraja himself was responsible for the construction of the *Suttalaya* round the Gommata statue. Pochavve, mother of Gangaraja, caused the Parshvanatha Basti to be constructed on the Chandragiri hill. Achaladevi, wife of Chandramauli, another Hoysala minister got the Akkana Basti built in the town Hullarasa was another general who had close connections with Shravana Belgola.

After the Hoysalas, Shravana Belgola quietly came under the hegemony of the Vijayanagara rulers Of the five records of this period, the one of Bukka I dated A D 1368 is described as the royal charter of rights granted in favour of the minorities of the state. Many Jaina teachers are eulogized in the records at Shravana Belgola dating from the eleventh century A D onwards They refer to academic disputations to uphold the principles of Jainism These also indicate a challenge that Jainism had to face in the wake of the rise and popularity of Virashaivism, Vaishnavism and Srivaishnavism Chalukyas of Kalyana adopted a policy of religious tolerance, and thus helped to a great extent the spread of Jainism. The period witnessed socio-religious reform and it resulted in the followers of several schools trying to protect their interests It is in this context that the records of Bukka I dated A D. 1368 are to be studied.

Bukkaraya, in order to resolve the conflict between *Bhavyas* (Jainas) and *Bhaktas* (Srivaishnavas) over certain matters of privilege and procedure decreed that there was no distinction between the two creeds and both of them ought to be treated equally. Tirumala Tatayya, the Srivaishnava leader, with the permission of the *Bhavyas* was to collect 1 anna per annum from each door (house) of the Jainas in the kingdom for providing bodyguards to Vaishnavas of Belagula-Tirtha and from out of the remaining sum to repair and renovate the ruined Jinalayas after providing twenty bodyguards to the God This compromise brought about by the king could be considered as an award, a declaration of rights and freedom of religion and worship

The Wodeyars of Mysore continued to give royal patronage to this great Jain centre. Chikkadevaraja (A D. 1672-1704) seems to have either renovated or enlarged the pond in the village and it is named after him in the record of Dodda Krishnaraja dated A. D. 1723 This king made a gift of eight villages beside *kasabe Belgula* for worship and offerings for Gommata and the village *Kabale* for maintaining a feeding house by the side of the pond The later Maharajas of Mysore kept the tradition of extending patronage to this Jain pilgrimage centre alive.

—L K. SRINIVASAN

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The Ritual of the Bath

The periodic *mahamastakabhisheka*, the head anointing ceremony, of the Gommateshvara image at Shravana Belgola is an integral part of that ancient and composite Indian tradition which provides a ritual basis to the various creeds The rite of the sacred bath occupies an important place in the Brahmanical and Hindu practices as well as in those of the Buddhists and the Jains

An image of a deity when created by a craftsman is not deemed worthy of worship but is treated like any other secular material object An image becomes sacred and thereby fit for installation in a temple only after it has undergone consecration rites Just as an individual in the *varna* classification of society becomes a true *dvija*, a twice-born Brahmana, Kshatriya or Vaishya, only after going through certain consecratory rituals, so also an image is considered fit for worship after consecration

An essential feature in the consecration ceremonies of a divine image is the sacred bath Kashyapa's *Book of Wisdom*, a ritual handbook of the *Vaikhanasas* which formed a part of the Taittiriya branch of the *Krishna Yajurveda*, deals elaborately with the consecration of a Vishnu image A passage in this book states, "the image, which was up till now a piece of material (which has been perfected, it is true, to a high degree) will now be made fit to serve as a dwelling-place for god's divine power, it will be 'awakened', 'brought to life, by the opening of the eyes', purified by a stay for some time in water and milk, Vishnu's presence is invoked, into a pot of water after which the image is bathed " This description clearly indicates that the main function of this ritual was to render the image holy

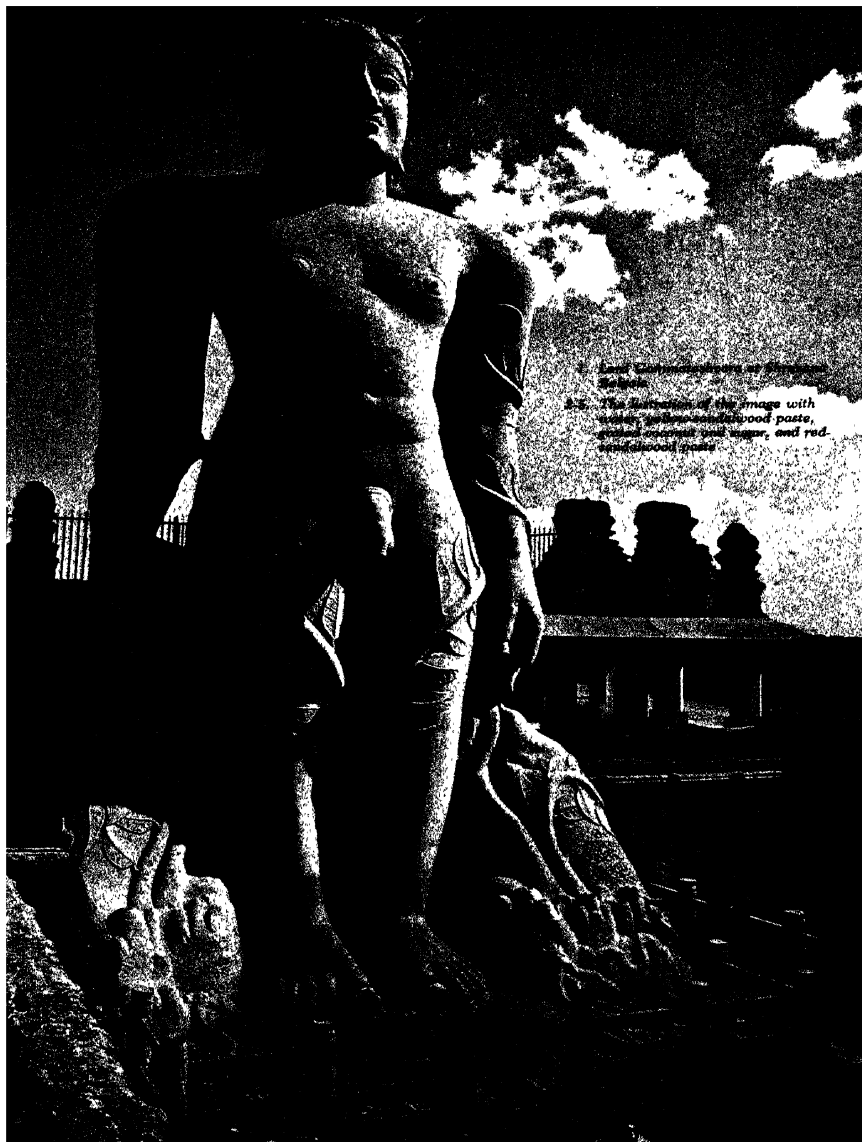
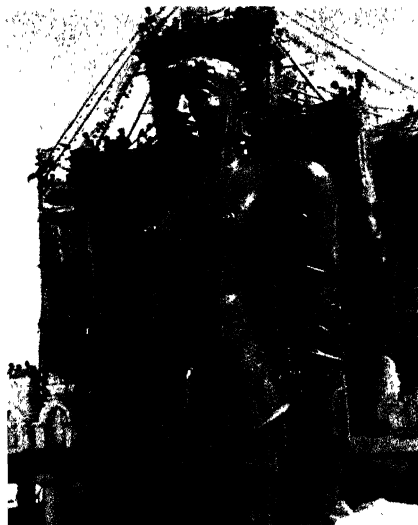
Kashyapa also classifies the details of the ritual bath in the following words

> " have an auspicious day proclaimed, go to a pond or a river filled with water, worship (the pond or river) with the epithet 'the auspicious sacred spot (*tirtha*), the benevolent, the giver of auspicious things, the abode of God (I worship)', spread out a couch (in it), meditate on the water as being the ocean of cold water and lay down the image (on the couch) in the same way (with its head in the eastern direction) If (a pond or river are) unavailable, he may also lay it down in a water bucket '

It is interesting to note that the image requires a purificatory bath not only at the time of its consecration ceremonies but also during regular worship offered to it after its installation in a temple Along with many indications for auspicious time, suitable *mantras* and invocations as well as various kinds of offerings, Kashyapa prescribes a stage-by-stage bath of the image with water, the primeval one (*adya*) He gives a very detailed technical description of collecting, purifying and pouring of the water for anointing the image during daily rituals

According to Kashyapa the main stages in the consecration of an image are the depositing of an embryo in the earth consisting of the various products of the earth whereby the area and soil of the site are made fit and fertile, the *akshonmeshanam*, the opening of the eye, to be performed by the chief artisan by symbolically moving a golden pin along the lashes, eyelids, the red, white and black circles and the lens, and the purificatory bath as described above

The Buddhists also seem to have had a similar ritual with the highest accent placed on the ceremony of the opening of the eyes

1. Lord Gommateshvara at Shravana Belgola

2-5. *The lustration of the image with water, yellow-sandalwood paste, grated coconut and sugar, and red-sandalwood paste*

6 *Indra giving the sacred bath at birth to the infant Tirthankara, Folio from a manuscript of the* Kalpasutra and Kalakacharyakatha, *painted c A D 1375-1400 in western India, probably Gujarat Collection The Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay*

The sacred bath holds a very important place in Jain ritualism A ritual bath is given to the image that is being consecrated, but has a completely different significance attached to it Secondly, a Jina image is given a daily bath as part of the morning ritual Thirdly, on special occasions of *tirthayatra* or *rathayatra* too, a bath is given On festive occasions such as the anniversaries of one of the five auspicious events (embryo, birth, renunciation, enlightenment and *moksha* or *nirvana*) of any Tirthankara, a special ritual bath might be given in a temple

The Jain ritual of bath of the image has obviously been derived from the same common pool from which the Hindus and the Buddhists have derived theirs However, as it developed over the centuries, within the confines of the peculiar Jain belief and mythology, the ritual of the sacred bath has become a typical phenomenon

The Ritual of Idol Installation and the Sacred Bath

The idea that every Tirthankara undergoes five benedictory events, namely that of conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment and *nirvana*, is old and central to Jainism To a large extent the Jain mythology, iconography and ritualism revolve around this concept and the ritual of consecration is no exception A new idol is consecrated by the ritual enactment of the above five events on the image

A large mass of books known as *pratishtha*-literature belonging chiefly to medieval times describes in detail the technical aspects of the consecration ritual The present-day installation

ceremonies are based on these texts. In such rituals the space around the new temple which is to be initiated is ritually purified and symbolically converted into the 'country' in which the Jina was born, in which he renounced the world, where he attained enlightenment, and where he was finally liberated

In a Digambara Jain ceremony that I attended in 1972 in the village of Songadh, Saurashtra, the five events of the life of Mahavira were ritually enacted by devotees playing the roles of Indras, the parents of Mahavira, other celestial beings, etc To initiate the image through the great event of conception the small movable image (*mulnayaka*) was placed inside a casket representing the embryo and kept there overnight On the next day the image was initiated through the great event of birth A person ritually appointed as Indra removed the image from the embryo to signify birth Then, Indra took the image on the back of his elephant vehicle to Mount Meru, a stepped pyramidical structure constructed half a kilometer away from the temple On top of this Mount Meru the image was anointed to represent the sacred bath at birth by devotees acting as Indras About a kilometer away in a park, in an enclosure made under an Asoka tree, the ceremony of plucking the hair and thereby the great event of renunciation was performed In the temple compound itself the replica of the *samavasarana*, the mythical preaching hall of the Jina, was built on a raised platform The image was placed in the middle of this hall for the event of enlightenment The letters of alphabet were inscribed on the body of the image to impart it knowledge Finally, a few pieces of sandal wood were burned in a corner to indicate death and *moksha*, liberation of the Tirthankara and the image was placed under triple memorial canopies The image was thus consecrated

Since here we are concerned chiefly with the importance of the ritual of the sacred bath, I shall elaborate on the subject of bath after birth given to the image The *jalayatra*, or bringing of water in a procession for the lustration rites is a significant factor in the ritual of the sacred bath In his work, the *Jalayatravidhi*, Ratnashekhara mentions that water needed for a bathing ceremony is to be collected from 108 different places For this purpose those participating in the ritual go to a water-place with empty pots and a Jina image They worship the image with a sacred bath at the water-place and after paying homage to the goddess of water the female participants collect the water in the pots and bring it to the temple in a procession According to Hemachandra's text of the *Trishashtishalakapurushacharita* the water for Mahavira's bath was collected by Indras from different *tirthas*, holy places In contemporary Gujarat the Jain ritual of bringing sacred water for the lustration ceremony often involves a procession where the conductor of the ceremony, accompanied by young ladies carrying water-pots goes to a river bed Here the conductor of the ritual digs 108 holes in the river bed and collects water from them The 108 holes represent the 108 wells, rivers, lakes, or *tirthas* from which water should be collected according to traditional requirements Underlying this procedure is the belief that water-places are inhabited by deities, and by collecting water from 108, i e many places, a large amount of auspiciousness is acquired On occasions, 108 small jugs of water, symbolically representing the waters collected from 108 sacred places, are emptied on the image

A ritual bath of the Jina image takes place daily in the Jain temple in memory of the great event of the birth of the Jina and the sacred bath given to him by Indra

On various occasions such as the installation of a new idol, the completion of a long-drawn penance, the anniversaries of the great events of the Jina's life or on the culmination the annual *paryushana* festival, a *rathayatra* or a chariot festival, is organized. A broken image, according to Kalyanavijaya's *Kalyanakalika*, can be reinstalled after the ceremony of a sacred bath and a chariot festival.

In the contemporary Shvetambara *rathayatra* of a Jina image the practice of *abisheka* or the ritual bath in the *ratha*, the mobile shrine, has been discontinued This feature is noteworthy as a recent change because the early Shvetambara literature includes graphic descriptions of the sacred bath during *rathayatra* The Digambara Jains, on the other hand maintain the ritual of the sacred bath during the *rathayatra*

A detailed description of the *rathayatra* occurs in the *Parishishthaparvan* of Hemachandra of *c* 11th/12th century It is repeated in *Shraddhavidhi* of Ratnasekhara written in c 15th century In this account a reference is made to a *chaitya paripati* or a visit to all the temples of a town on *samvatsari*, the culmination day of the *paryushana* festival This text considers that the act of *chaitya paripati* is complete only when a *rathayatra* is organized Also described is a *rathayatra* with a chariot resembling Surya's car which shone like gold and jewels A Jina image placed inside it was duly worshipped As the sacred bath of the image was being performed the water fell on the ground just like the streams of water falling down Mount Meru after Indra gave the first bath to the Jina The image was then worshipped with incense and lamps The *shravakas*, surrounded by musicians and groups of singing women pulled the chariot Finally the chariot reached the palace where the king paid homage to the Jina in the chariot

The *Mahaviracharita* a section in Hemachandra's *Trishashtishalakapurushacharita* mentions that the earth soaked with the Lord's bath-water became worthy of worship

Such is the importance and significance of the bath of the cult image in Jainism The idea of giving purificatory bath to the image for consecration is common in other creeds too But the concept of initiation of the image through the five great events, including the bath after the great event of birth is peculiar to Jainism alone

The ritual of *mahamastakabhisheka* of the Gommatesvara image at Shravana Belgola is in memory of the first consecratory bath given to the image by the Ganga minister Chamundaraya and his guru Nemichandra Siddhanta Chakravarti The 17 7 metres high image was executed from the topmost section of the granite hill Vindhyagiri or Indragiri in the year A D 981 under the inspiration of Nemichandra Siddhanta Chakravarti and the patronage of Chamundaraya, The details of its conception, execution and the initiation are given in the *Chamundaraya Purana* composed in prose in Kannada in the year 978 by Chamundaraya himself

After the event, it seems, there have been regular ceremonies of head anointing and the sacred bath every 12 years According to the inscription no. 360 of the *Epigraphica carnatica*, a grand 12-yearly ceremony took place in the year A D 1398, and that seven such ceremonies had taken place earlier Most of the later ceremonies are recorded in literature and inscriptions of the later periods.

— JYOTINDRA JAIN

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The Mahamastakabhisheka

The *pratushthapana mahotsava*, the consecration ceremony, of the great Gommateshvar image took place:

in the Kalki year six centuries
in the praiseworthy (cyclic) year Vibhava
in the month of Chaitra
on the fifth lunar day of the bright half of the month
on Sunday
when the Lagna or Zodiacal sign of Kumbha (Aquarius)
was in the ascendant
with the yoga called Saubhagya
and the lunar constellation being Masta (Orion head)
in the small hour of the night
in the city of Belgola.

		Mesha	Vrishabha	Mithuna	
Mina	Ravi 10	Sukra 5 Rahu 7	Chandr 4 Guru 3	Kuja	
Kumbha	Lagna Budha 2	Position of the planets on 13th March 981			Karkataka
Makara					Simha
			Sani 6 Ketu 1		Kanya
	Dhanu	Vrischika	Tula		

This horoscope shows that the time indicated is Sunday, 13 March 981 from 3.12 a. m to 5.06 p. m. the day according to Indian calculations being from sunrise to sunset.

The consecration rites were conducted according to the rules prescribed in the Jain texts by Chamundaraya, the commander-in-chief of the kings of the Ganga dynasty of Talakad. It was a grand event, its scale befitting both the huge size of the image as well as the exalted status of the *yajamana*, the host—Chamundaraya.

Among the many rituals in the consecration ceremony there is the *abhisheka* or the sacred bath. When Chamundaraya attempted to perform the *panchamritabhisheka* or lustration of image with five substances · milk, curds, ghee, saffron and water, the liquids would not descend below the navel of the figure. Vast quantities of these were poured over the figure but to no avail. Chamundaraya, filled with grief and consternation, tried again and again but his intention to perform the head-anointing ceremony, to bathe the image from top to bottom, could not be realized At this moment the celestial nymph Kushmandini assumed the form of a poor old lady and carrying the *panchamrita* in a *beliya gola* or a small silver pot appeared in front of Chamundaraya. She indicated to Chamundaraya that she would like to anoint the statue with the liquid in her little pot and Chamundaraya burst out laughing at the absurdity of the proposal—of attempting what had not been in his power to effect He, however, permitted her to do so And to the utter astonishment of all who had assembled there, the few drops of *panchamrita* from the little vase covered the image fully. Chamundaraya immediately realized and repented for having succumbed to unworthy feelings of pride and arrogance at having caused such a magnificent statue to be sculpted. He now approached the task with humbleness and devotion and the *panchamrita* covered the image from head to toe. From that time the town came to be known as *Beliya gola*, the silver vase, and the head anointing ceremony was performed periodically

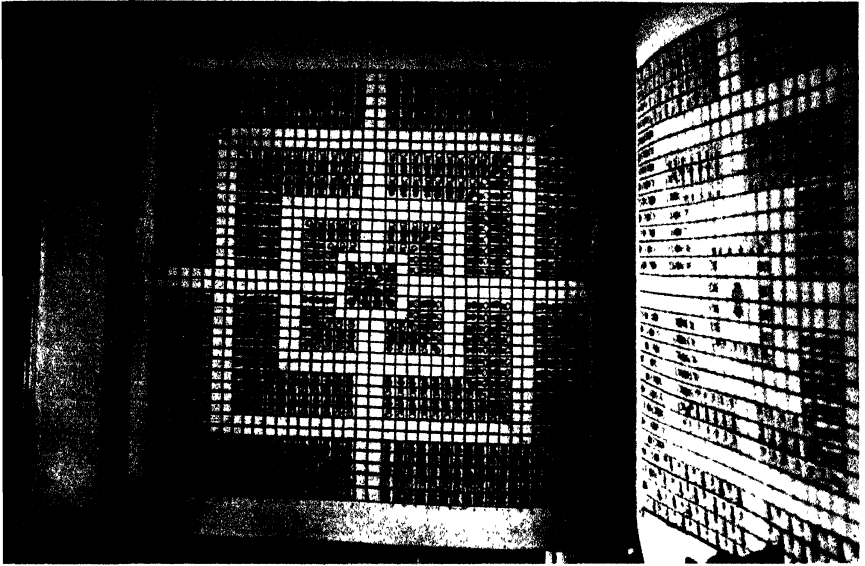
The *abhisheka*, as a rule, is a daily event for any image in worship, but the colossal size of this image makes it impossible Thus, only the feet of the image are bathed daily in what is known as *pada-puja*, and the head-anointing ceremony or the *mastakabhisheka* performed occasionally Later the ceremony of *mastakabhisheka* came to be termed as *mahamastakabhisheka* as it was performed at certain conjunctions of the heavenly bodies at intervals of several years, usually after 10 to 15 years The ritual is impressive and spectacular with many monks and priests, and thousands of pilgrims taking part in it. The *mahamastakabhisheka* is popularly known as the Grand Festival of Shravana Belgola

The festival begins a few days earlier and terminates a few days after the day of *mahamastakabhisheka* During this period various festivals and *pujas* take place. Thousands of pilgrims and spectators throng at Shravana Belgola for the occasion, giving it a colourful festive air.

On the morning of the *mahamastakabhisheka* day the court-yard in front of the colossus presents a glorious sight. On the ground, strewn with layers of fresh green paddy, 1008 coloured *kalashas* or pots are arranged in a geometrical pattern. Each pot has a coconut with green mango leaves fastened to it with auspicious coloured thread. Of the 1008 pots, 900 are used for the first anointing, 103 for the second and only 5 for the third and last anointing.

When the ceremony is due to start a number of Jain priests take up their positions on a high scaffolding specially erected for the purpose. Each priest holds in his hands one *kalasha* or pot of milk and one of ghee. At the signal of the officiating dignatory they lustrate the image first with milk and then with ghee.

After this first purifying bath or anointing, the Jain priests offer worship to the Gommateshvara image till noon At the stroke of one o'clock the great *mahamastakabhisheka* begins. In the former times, when Shravana Belgola was within the territories of Mysore State, the Maharaja of Mysore had the hereditary privilege of performing the first *puja* of the image on the occasion.

As the appointed hour draws near, a thousand priests climb to their places on the scaffolding with pots of water Suitable music is played by the temple musicians while the priests chant

Folio from a manuscript of the Pratistha Tilaka A D 1881, depicting diagrammatically the arrangement of 1008 kalashas *for the Mahamastakabhisheka*

hymns and prayers from the Jain sacred texts At the auspicious moment the thousand pots of water are emptied over the image amidst shouts of "Jai", "Jai"

Except for a few cryptic words we have very little information on the *mahamastakabhisheka* ceremonies that must have been conducted since the consecration of the statue. The few that have been recorded are·

A. D. 1398: This, the earliest reference, occurs in an inscription which informs us that one Panditacharya performed seven *mahamastakabhishekas* like this earlier

A. D. 1612: Performed by a person by the name of Shanti Varni.

A. D. 1659: Performed by His Highness Shri Maharaja Dodda Devaraja Wodiyar Bahadur of Mysore.

A D. 1677: Performed by Vishalakka Pandita, the Jain minister of the Mysore King Chikka Devaraja Wodiyar.

A. D. 1800: Performed by His Highness the Maharaja Mummadi Krishna-Raja Wodiyar (III) Bahadur of Mysore.

A D. 1825· Performed by the Mysore King Krishna-Raja Wodiyar (III).

A D 1827 Mentioned in an inscription

A D. 1871: Capt J S. F Mackenzie of Mysore Commission noted this event.

A D. 1887· Shri Laxmi Sena Bhattaraka Swami of Kolhapur Digambara Jain Matha performed this *mahamastakabhisheka* on 14th March at the expense of Rs. 30,000. An account of this ceremony states

The 14th March last was the day of anointing for the statue of Gommateshvara. It was a great day in anticipation of which 20,000 pilgrims gathered there from all parts of India. There were Bengalis, there were Gujaratis also, and there were Tamil people in great numbers. Some arrived a full month before the time and the stream continued to flow until the afternoon of the day of the great festival For a whole month there was daily worship in all the temples, and *pada-puja* or worship of the feet of the great idol besides On the great day, the 14th March 1887, the people began to ascend the hill even before dawn in the hope of securing good places from which to see everything Among them were large numbers of women and girls in very bright attire, carrying with them brass or earthen pots. By 10 O'clock all available space in the temple enclosure was filled. Opposite the idol an area of 40 square feet was streamed with bright yellow paddy, on which were placed 1000 gaily painted earthenware pots, filled with sacred water, covered with coconuts and adorned with mango leaves Above the image was scaffolding, on which stood several priests, each having at hand pots filled with milk, ghee and such-like things. At a signal from the Kolhapur Swami, the master of the ceremonies, the contents of these vessels were poured simultaneously over the head of the idol. This was a sort of preliminary bath, but the grand bath took place at 2 O'clock Amid the horrible dissonance of many instruments the thousand pots already mentioned were lifted as if by magic from the reserved area to the scaffolding and all their contents poured over the image, the priests meanwhile chanting texts from the sacred books. Evidently the people were much impressed There were mingled cries of "Jai Jai Maharaja" and 'Ahaha, ahaha', the distinctive exclamations of northern and southern Indians to mark their wonder and approval In the final anointing, fifteen different substances were used, namely, (1) water, (2) coconut meal, (3) plantains, (4) jaggery, (5) ghee, (6) sugar, (7) almonds, (8) dates, (9) poppy seeds, (10) milk, (11) curds, (12) sandal, (13) gold flowers, (14) silver flowers, and (15) silver coins. With the gold and silver flowers there were mixed nine varieties of precious gems, and silver coins to the amount of Rs. 500 completed the offering.

A D 1900 A reference to this ceremony occurs in an issue of the Journal, the *Indian Antiquary.*

A D. 1910 His Highness Krishna Rajendra Wodiyar attended the ceremony and performed *puja.* From the social point of view the event proved significant as the All-India Digambara Jain Mahasabha held a session and resolved to introduce certain measures for the advancement of the community.

A D 1925: Approximately 30,000 persons attended this ceremony. His highness Krishna Rajendra Wodiyar, the Maharaja of Mysore, walked up the hill bare-footed, witnessed the entire anointment ceremony, personally performed the *puja,* did *'sashtanga-namaskar'* (bowed in prostrate position) to the Gommatesh image, gave personal donations of Rs. 5000/- to the *Abhisheka* Fund and Rs. 500/- to the Jain *Matha* and showed personal regard by doing *namaskara* to His Holiness Charukirti Bhattaraka, the head pontiff of Shravana Belgola.

A. D. 1940: The ceremony was celebrated in the presence of about two hundred thousand people from different parts of India. The grand ceremony started at 9-30 a. m. on the 26th February 1940, when the first *abhisheka*, anointment, of the image of Gommateshvara was performed by His Highness Shri Krishna Rajendra Wodiyar, the Maharaja of Mysore accompanied by the Prince Shri Jaya Chamarajendra Wodiyar During this festival the 1008 *kalashas*, decorated pots, used for the *mahamastakabhisheka* ceremony were divided into four categories as follows·

1. Gold *Kalashas*	·	51
2. Silver *Kalashas*	:	300
3. German Silver *Kalashas*	:	300
4. Brass *Kalashas*	:	357
		1008

and were disposed of in public auction. The first Gold *kalasha* of great honour was taken for Rs 8001/- By the auction sale of these *kalashas* over Rs. 75,000 were collected and deposited with the Mysore Government towards the protection and upkeep of the sacred image of Gommateshvara

A. D. 1953· This time the 1008 *kalashas*, decorated pots, used for *mahamastakabhisheka* ceremony were divided into only two categories: 900 Silver *Kalashas* and 108 Gold *Kalashas* A flat rate of Rs 101 each was fixed for the 900 Silver *Kalashas* while the 108 Gold *Kalashas* were auctioned. Further, four *'chatushkona kumbhas'* and *'pushpavrushti'*, showering of flowers, were added as new items and were also disposed of by public auction. The first Gold *Kalasha* of great honour was taken for Rs. 18,001 (as against Rs. 8001 on the previous occasion). The rest of the 107 Gold *Kalashas* inclusive of four *'chatushkona kumbhas'* and *'pushpavrushti'* were sold for different sums ranging from Rs 121 up to Rs. 5,501.

It is interesting to note that at the 1925 *mahamastakabhisheka* celebrations, out of 1008 *kalashas* only 546 *kalashas* were sold with a total realization of Rs. 77,193, whereas, in 1953 all the *kalashas* were disposed of netting a sum of Rs. 1,59,799.

The preliminaries of the *mahamastakabhisheka* festival commenced on the 18th February 1953 and the great ceremony was conducted on the 5th March 1953 in the presence of His Highness Shri Jaya Chamarajendra Wodiyar, the Maharaja of Mysore.

A. D. 1967: In keeping with the established practice, the 1008 Gold and Silver *Kalashas* meant for the *mahamastakabhisheka* ceremony were made available to the devotees through public auction and sale. The first Gold *Kalasha* of great honour was taken in public auction for Rs. 47,500 as against Rs 18,001 in 1953 and Rs. 8,001 in 1940.

The festival of the *mahamastakabhisheka* began on 15th March 1967 and the great lustration rites were performed on the 30th March 1967. The ceremonies on this day were witnessed by a huge gathering of about five hundred thousand.

The most spectacular and memorable feature of the event was *akasha pushpavrushti*, the showering of multicoloured flowers along with huge quantities of red vermilion and saffron colour powder upon the image by means of a helicopter. The crowds spontaneously responded with loud shouts of 'Shri Bahubali Bhagwan ki Jai' — 'Victory to Lord Bahubali'.

A D 1981 The programme of *mahamastakabhisheka* festival is from 9th February 1981 to 15th March 1981, with the great *abhisheka* scheduled for 22nd February. An extra-ordinary special significance of historical nature has been attached to this ceremony as it marks the 1000th anniversary of the consecration of the Bahubali image

The 1008 *kalashas* meant for the *mahamastakabhisheka* ceremony have been divided into eight different categories:

10	Shatabdi Kalasha	Rs.	1,00,000	each
4	Divya Kalasha	Rs	50,000	each
4	Ratna Kalasha	Rs.	25,000	each
200	Suvarna Kalasha	Rs	11,000	each
200	Rajat Kalasha	Rs	5,000	each
140	Tamra Kalasha	Rs	2,500	each
200	Kasya Kalasha	Rs	1,000	each
250	Gulla-Kayaji Kalasha	Rs.	500	each
1008				

It is learnt that due to overwhelming public response all the categories of *kalashas* have already been purchased by the devotees

Another new feature is the *Jana-mangala Maha-Kalasha Pravartana* launched under the enlightened leadership of monk Elacharya Munishree Vidyanand Maharaj In a way it marks the beginning of the *Bahubali Pratishthapana Sahasrabdi Mahotsava*, the 1000th Anniversary Celebrations of the Consecration of the Image of Bahubali. According to this scheme an eight-foot high holy copper urn has been placed on a decorated chariot which is to start its travel from Delhi and passing through 110 major cities and towns of the country is to reach the destination of Shravana Belgola on the 20th February 1981 This *Jana-mangala Maha-kalasha* received a ceremonial send-off from Smt Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India on the 29th September 1980 at the Red Fort grounds in Delhi. This 'Holy Urn' is accompanied by large groups of Jain pilgrims, who will, on the way, spread the message of humanity, love and peace of Lord Bahubali, the symbol of tolerance and non-violence.

—VILAS A SANGHAVE

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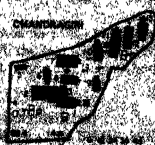
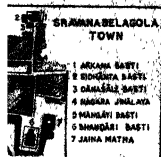
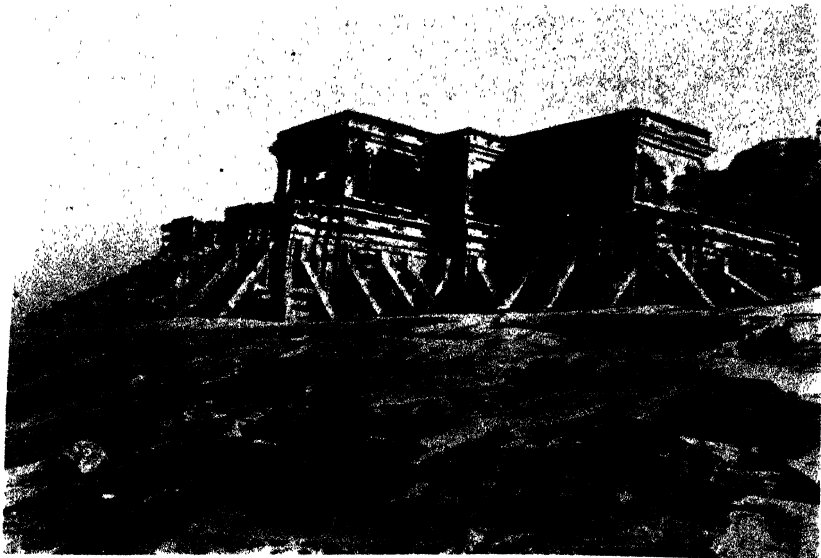
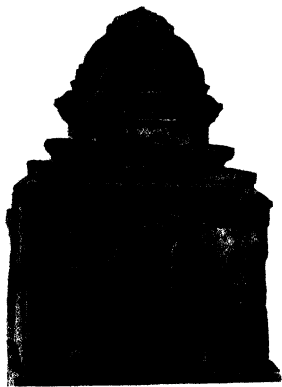

Jainism acquired an important place in the history of the region during the reign of the Gangas in southern Karnataka. Under their patronage there was an upsurge in intellectual pursuits in both Sanskrit and Kannada, usually of a Jain nature as well as the development of architectural centres.

1 Odegal Basti, c twelfth century, Hoysala period

2 The Tyagada Pillar, A. D 980

3 The Brahmadeva Mandapa built around the Tyagada pillar appears to be a later structure

Chauvisatirthankara Basti is a small shrine which faces east. It consists of a *garbhagriha*, vestibule and porch enclosed on two sides. It is unclear when or by whom this small structure was built. The name of the *basti* derived from the object of worship which is a slab of stone with the figures of the twenty-four Tirthankaras on it. A Marvadi inscription in the shrine records that this image was set up in A D 1648.

Odegal Basti is so named because of the props used to support and buttress the high platform on which the building is placed. It can also be called the *trikuta basti* due to the three *garbhagrihas* placed around a common *navaranga*, a hall with a ceiling divided into nine sections. Each *garbhagriha* has its own vestibule. The structure faces north with

the main image of Adinatha in the south cella, that of Neminatha in the east and Shantinatha in the west.

The temple dates from Hoysala times and has parallels with the contemporary *trikuta bastis* found at Markuli in Hassan District, Colasandra in Mandya District and Heragu in Hassan District, all of the twelfth century. Ultimately the Jain use of this three-shrined type goes back to the Panchakuta Basti where two other shrines were added to the basic plan at Kambadahalli in Mandya District of *c* A.D. 900 built by the Gangas.

Other parallels are found in the group of *trikutas* which overlook the main temple at Hampi (Vijayanagara) probably built during Kampili times. These temples have often been described as of Jain consecration, but they were probably originally Hindu in dedication. The style of the temples with their very neatly cut granite, as well as their placement on a steep hill, is very close to the Odegal Basti.

Brahmadeva Mandapa is an odd structure. It is actually a small pavilion built high in the air around the Brahmadeva image on top of a column known as the Tyagada Brahmadeva *kamba* This pillar is of exquisite workmanship and originally bore a long inscription of Chamundaraya, the person who commissioned the carving of the colossus.

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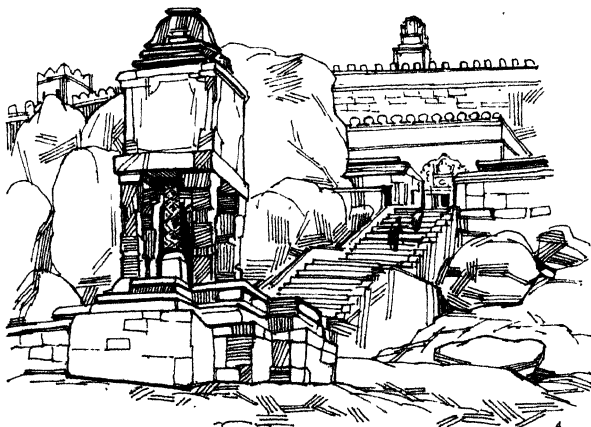
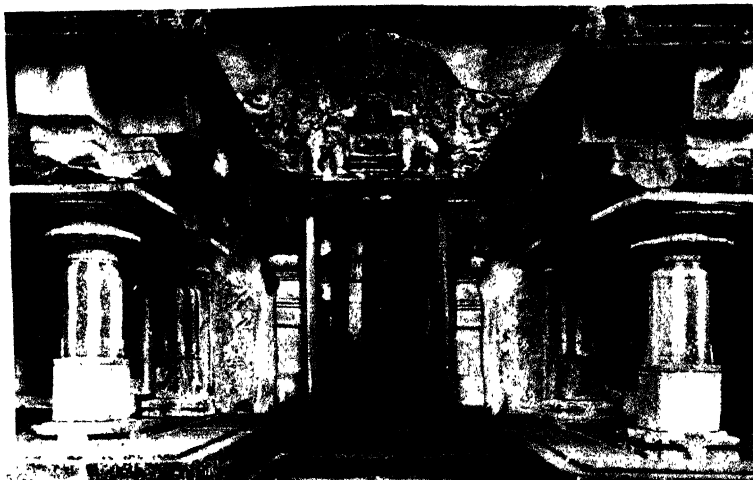

4 Way from Brahmadeva Mandapa to the Akhanda Bagilu

5 *The Akhanda Bagilu*
c *twelfth century*

This inscription was almost entirely effaced by the addition of a later record of *c* A D 1200. Due to the destruction of Chamundaraya's inscription we may have lost much valuable information concerning the erection of the Bahubali image and Chamundaraya's many donations at this site The pillar itself must belong to the same period as the colossus, while the cella built on four rough-hewn columns must date from a much later period

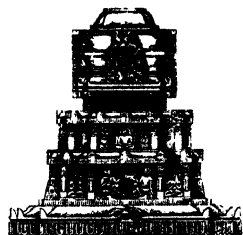
It has been suggested that the name *Tyagada* may imply that this was the spot where the distribution of sacred gifts was made

Akhanda Bagilu, the unbroken doorway, is the entrance to the last flight of stairs leading up to the compound of the great Bahubali image The doorway, as its name suggests, is carved out of single piece of rock The decorative lintel features the figure of Lakshmi being lustrated by an elephant standing on either side The whole dates from the twelfth century and consists of the ornamental gateway flanked by two shrines facing north and dedicated to the sons of Rishabha, the first Tirthankara The structure on the right contains the figure of Bahubali while that on the left has the statue of Bharata Both images were erected in *c* A D 1130 by the general Bharateshvara, a lay disciple of Gandavimukta Saiddhantadeva It is reasonable to assume that the doorway was built at this time

Three memorial stones are embedded in the wall of the Bharata shrine.

Siddharagunda, the rock of the *siddhas* is to the left of the Akhanda Bagilu It has a large number of images carved upon its rocky surface Its placement near the principal entrance on the hill is particularly striking

6 *Nishidhi Pillar of Panditaraya Yati, A. D. 1398*

7 *The Siddharagundu; rock with rows of carved Jina figures*

Siddhara Basti is a small shrine which faces west towards the Gullakayajji Mandapa. This temple consists of a porch and a cella which houses the image of a *siddha* or a Jain saint placed on a platform approximately 60 cm. high. On either side of the entrance to the cella, in the porch, is a lovely fourteenth century *nishidhi* pillar of late Hoysala workmanship. They evince a similarity in style to the pillars in the Mahanavami Mandapa on Chandragiri. There is no inscriptional evidence recording the date of the construction of this *basti* or of the dedication of the *siddha* image in the cella.

Gommateshvara (Lord of the hillock) is a representation of Bahubali, the son of the first Tirthankara, Adinatha. After defeating his brother Bharata in battle, he renounced the world and went off to seek enlightenment.

Gommateshvara, nude and standing erect in the typical Jain *kayotsarga* posture is depicted with the *madhavi* creeper growing up his legs and anthills around his feet due to the long period of time which he kept this posture. Although his actual name is Bahubali, he is usually called Gommateshvara due to his position on a hillock (*Kummata* or *Gommata*).

Inscriptions in three different languages and scripts inform us that Chamundaraya had this image made The Chamundaraya they refer to is the celebrated general of the king of the Ganga dynasty The statue was consecrated in A D. 981

Other inscriptions at the feet of Bahubali state that Gangaraja, the general of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana built the *suttalaya*, the cloister around the image, in c A D 1117 Still another inscription of c A D 1159 records the patronage of Hullaraja, a minister of the Hoysala king Narasimha I The placement of the inscriptions of these two later important men so close to that of Chamundaraya himself clearly place these later patrons in the same level as the first great patron of the site. Gangaraja commissioned many temples on Chandragiri, the smaller hill His name suggests that he was in some way attached to the Ganga family Hullaraja on the other hand did very little building, but the Bhandari Basti that he constructed in the town is the largest temple at Shravana Belgola and his deep dedication in the Jain faith is obvious from the installing of the twenty-four Tirthankara images in the Bhandari Basti and in the cloister around Bahubali on the top of the hill

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8 Gommateshvara, also known as Bahubali Bhujabali, Dorbali, Kukkuta Jina and Kukkuteshvara, A D 981

9-11 Inscriptions of the foot of Gommateshvara figure The inscription in Marathi is the earliest known inscription in this language

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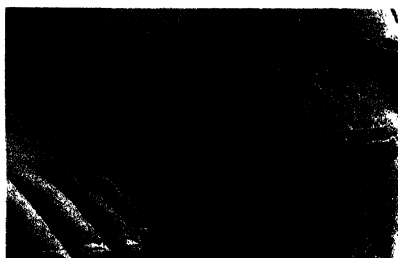
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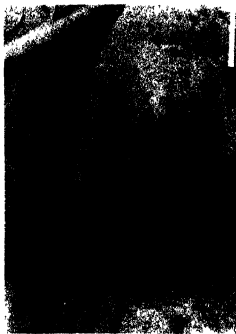
12. *Indra holding a pot, panel in the ceiling of the* Suttalaya *of Gommateshvara, c A D 1117*

Shortly after the construction of the compound wall in A.D. 1117, Gangaraja built the *suttalaya* or the cloister around the image creating a *pradakshinapatha*, circumambulatory path. Its entrance is of typical twelfth century Hoysala workmanship with nine elaborately carved ceilings, eight of which depict the guardians of the eight directions and the middle one depicts Indra holding a pot to be used to anoint the image of Bahubali. In the *suttalaya* are enshrined forty-three images – mostly Tirthankara figures. The outer wall was probably erected to protect the image, but the cloister creates an open air temple for the image While it was probably extremely beautiful to have the 17.7 metres high colossus standing alone on the rock, the present situation where the pilgrim loses site of Bahubali on his way up the hill and the dramatic impact of suddenly seeing him again at such close proximity is extremely awe-inspiring and it is this very quality that has led to the popularity of the image from early times

13. *Decorative stucco niches with figures along the parapet of the* Suttalaya

Many copies of the Gommateshvara image, several cast in bronze, are found throughout the state There are four principal large copies of it—the largest being at Karkal. It was carved in A.D 1432 and is approximately 12.5 metres tall A second one at Enur made in A.D 1604 is about 10 metres high. Both these sites are in South Kanara District, a region which is still a Jain stronghold. The other less impressive copies exist — one at Gommatagiri located about 25 kilometres from Mysore and the other at Shravanappa-gutta near Tippur. The former measures approximately 5 metres, while the second is only about 2 8 metres tall and is carved in half-relief instead of in the round like the others. The importance attached to figures of Bahubali becomes apparent from his images in many other Jain temples with a notable example in the Jain cave at Badami The curious detail found in this version is the long hair of the image, associating Bahubali with his father Adinatha This feature is not common for Bahubali images

14 *Gommateshvara, A D 981 It is recounted that the image appeared so perfect that on the orders of the patron, General Chamundaraya the index finger of the left hand of Bahubali was made short so that the defect may avert the evil eye*

A curious story is told about the fact that the forefinger of the left hand is shorter than it should be According to tradition, one of the reasons why King Vishnuvardhana converted from Jainism to Shri Vaishnavism was that a Jain *guru* refused food from the king's hand since it was mutilated Vishnuvardhana had lost a finger Consequently it is said that Ramanuja, the Shri Vaishnava reformer, mutilated the image of Gommateshvara as a revenge in kind It is a fanciful story which dates from later than Vishnuvardhana's reign Although this king is often depicted as anti-Jain, the many Jain edifices and structures built by his chief queen Shantaladevi suggests greater religious tolerance in the twelfth century than is supposed. The bitter sectarian disputes of later centuries tend to distort the situation in the earlier centuries. A more likely explanation for the shorter length of Gommateshvara's finger is that due to some flaw in the stone the finger broke during carving and the sculptors fashioned the nail of the finger where it had broken.

Gullakayajji Mandapa is a small pillared structure opposite the entrance of the cloister built around Gommateshvara. On the ground level it houses the image of Gullakayajji who faces in towards the image. A shrine above her enshrines Brahmadeva or Sarvahna yaksha.

After the completion of the carving of the Bahubali statue, Chamundaraya made elaborate arrangements to anoint the image with milk. Strangely enough, the large quantities of milk poured by Chamundaraya would not descend below the thighs of the figure while the few drops of milk brought by an old lady in a *gulla-kayi*, eggplant-fruit, not only covered it but flowed down to the valley floor forming a pond. This old lady is called Gullakayajji. This sculpture, though of very fine workmanship, appears from its facial and figural type to belong to the Vijayanagara period and therefore much later in date than the rest of the sculptures which can be attributed to Hoysala times.

Channanna Basti is a small structure which is a short distance away towards the right from the main path leading to the summit. It is situated along another less frequented path from the base to the summit.

15

15 Courtyard outside Suttalaya with Gullayakayajji Mandapa

16 Gullakayajji, c. fifteenth century, Vijayanagara period

16

It faces north towards the Chandragiri hill. It consists of a shrine chamber with an open *mandapa* in front. It was built by a man named Channanna in *c.* A. D. 1673 who also had a pond made to the south of the Bhandari Basti in the town below. The temple houses a small Chandranatha image and there are figures on two of the pillars in the *mandapa* which possibly depict Channanna and his wife. In front of the basti is a *manasthambha.*

There is an open *mandapa* to the northeast of this *basti* placed between two natural ponds.

Shravana Belagola Town

Jain Matha, formerly the residence of the *guru,* is a building of little architectural significance. The main images are found in three cells which are side by side and face west. The middle cell, a long room along the east wall, comprises the *garbhagriha* with wings on either side of it. The *garbhagriha* contains the image of the Tirthankara Chandraprabhu, and in the wings are bronze images displaying great diversity of style and iconography. In a cell on the right side of the entrance are housed numerous images made of precious and semi-precious substances.

An upper storey was added to the *matha* early in the twentieth century and the whole has been renovated with much ornate stucco work. The *matha* is most noted for its wall paintings.

Bhandari Basti was built by Hullaraja in *c* A. D 1159. He was the *bhandari,* Treasurer, of the Hoysala king Narasimha I. It is dedicated to the twenty-four Tirthankaras and individual images of the Tirthankaras are set up on a long pedestal along the south wall of the huge *garbhagriha* or shrine of the *basti.* The images face north and there are three doors to the shrine.

The temple has been greatly expanded over the years with the addition of large *mandapas* at the front and a stone railing around the whole structure. Stucco parapets and towers have also been added. As it stands, it is the largest building at Shravana Belgola. The *Manasthambha* in front of this temple is a fine monolithic structure.

Mangavi Basti is a plain structure which faces east. It was built in *c.* A.D. 1325 by a Jain lady named Mangayi, who apparently was a royal dancing girl hailing from Shravana Belgola. The temple now houses three Tirthankara figures the central one being that of Shantinatha, an image set up by Bhimadevi, the wife of Devaraya, taken to be the Devaraya I of Vijayanagara who ruled from A.D. 1406 to 1416. In front of the temple are two beautifully carved elephants.

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18

17 *Channana Basti with manasthambha, c A D 1673*

18 *Bhandari Basti, c A.D 1159, built by Hulla Raja, who was the treasurer of the Hoysala king Narasimha I*

19. ***The twenty-four Tirthankara images in the Bhandari Basti***

20 ***Elephant decorating the stairway of Mangayi Basti,*** c. *A D 1325*

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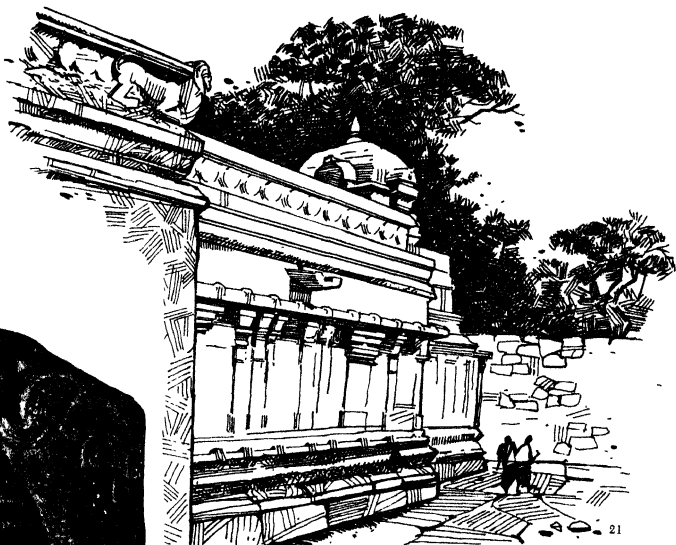
Nagara Jinalaya Basti built of potstone or chloritic schist, is a structure in a simple Dravidian style It faces west and was built by a minister of Ballala II by the name of Nagadeva in A D. 1195 It enshrines an Adinatha and originally consisted of a four-pillared *mandapa* leading to the vestibule and the shrine chamber. A large *mandapa* was added to the front in later years A stucco parapet and tower are also of later date.

The name *nagara* derives from the fact that merchants, *nagara* contributed to the support of this temple

Danashale Basti situated outside the entrance to the enclosure of the Akkana Basti enshrines a Pancha-Parameshti image. The Pancha-Parameshtis or the five *parameshtis* are· the Jinas, the Siddhas, the Acharyas, the Upadhyayas and the Sadhus. One figure from each class is represented on the slab No inscription records the dedication of this slab or of the building of simple structure

Siddhanta Basti is situated to the west of Akkana Basti in the same compound It is said to have once held all the books bearing on the Jain *Siddhanta* and hence its name. It now enshrines a marble Chaturvimshatitirthankara (Chauvisa Tirthankara) of the twenty-four Tirthankaras Parshvanatha stands in the centre and the panel bears the inscription in Marvadi of *c.* A D 1700 recording its dedication. The temple has no architectural importance.

Akkana Basti dedicated to Parshvanatha, was built in A.D. 1181 by the Jain lady Achiyakka, the wife of Chandramauli, a minister of Ballala II. The present name is a shortened form of the name Achiyakkana Basti or the *basti* of Achiyakka The temple faces almost east and is placed

21. *Nagara Jinalaya Basti, A. D. 1195*

22 *Pancha-Paramesthi image in the Danashale Basti*

23, 24. *Akkana Basti, plan and general views, A. D. 1181, Hoysala style*

25. *Detail of Stele with inscription outside Akkana Basti, A.D. 1181, Hoysala style*

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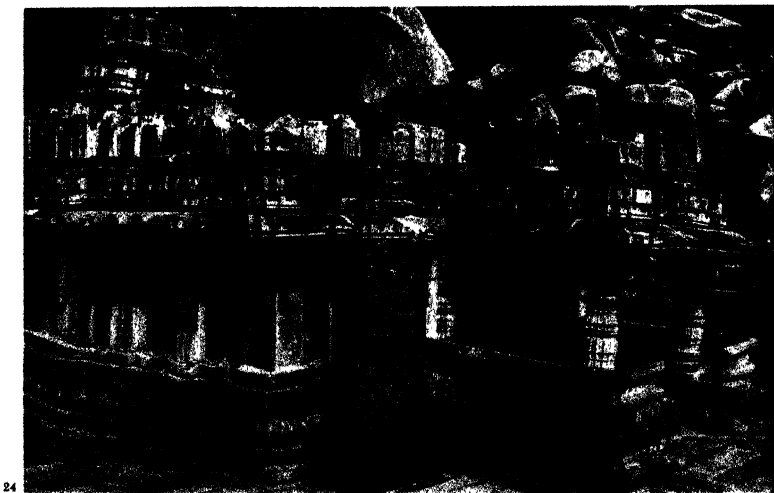
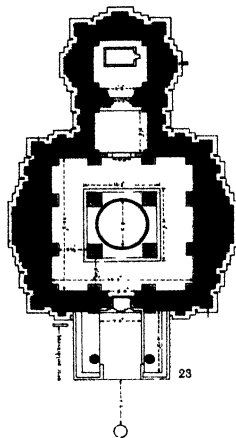
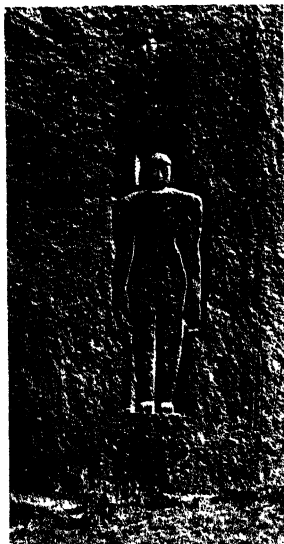

26 *Rock on Chandragiri hill from where Chamundaraya is supposed to have shot the arrow at the top of the Indragiri Hill*

27 *Detail of silhouette figure on Chamundaraya Rock*

28-29 *Chamundaraya Basti, general view, and plan, c end of tenth century*

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in a compound with an entrance on the south since the approach from the town leads upto it from the south It consists of a pillared porch and *navaranga* with vestibule and shrine chamber attached to the west wall Both the vestibule and the shrine chamber have elaborate doorways with perforated screens on either side In the vestibule are figures of Dharanendra and Padmavati, the Yaksha and Yakshi of the main image The exterior is articulated in the Late Chalukyan manner and the whole is built of chloritic schist, the usual material used for Late Chalukya and Hoysala temples The style can be compared to the Hoysala Shantisvara Basti at Jinanathapura situated 1 6 kilometres or so away What is lacking here is the band of large figures placed above the basement mouldings and against the elaborate articulation of the wall surfaces

Attached to the compound wall of the Akkana Basti is the smaller structure, the Siddhanta Basti The Danashale Basti is adjacent to Akkana Basti

Chandragiri (Chikkabetta)

Chandragiri or 'the mountain of Chandra' also called Chikkabetta or 'small hill' is the smaller of the two hills at Shravana Belgola At its summit it is approximately 930 metres above sea level. A large number of *bastis*, some of them the earliest at the site, are situated in an enclosure on the top of the hill There are also inscriptions of early date carved into the rock face of the hill near where the later *bastis* were built There are also a few ponds on the hill which are not shown in the sketch plan of the hill, notably the Kanchini-done built in the twelfth century by a man named Manabha and the Lakki-done near which are found some ninth/tenth century inscriptions

It is clear that from early times this hill was held auspicious by the Jains and many pious saints and devotees ended their days on Chandragiri The tradition of the Jains in the area teaches that Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya were two of these saints and that the history of the site goes back to their times in the third century B.C The earliest inscriptions on the hill, however, do not date from that far back

The building phase on the hill started in the tenth century with the construction of the Chandragupta and Chamundaraya Bastis, the latter belonging approximately to the same period as the Bahubali image on Vindhyagiri The great majority of the *bastis* on the hill date from the

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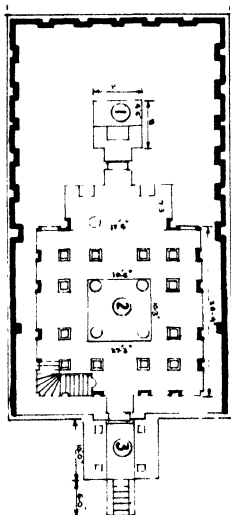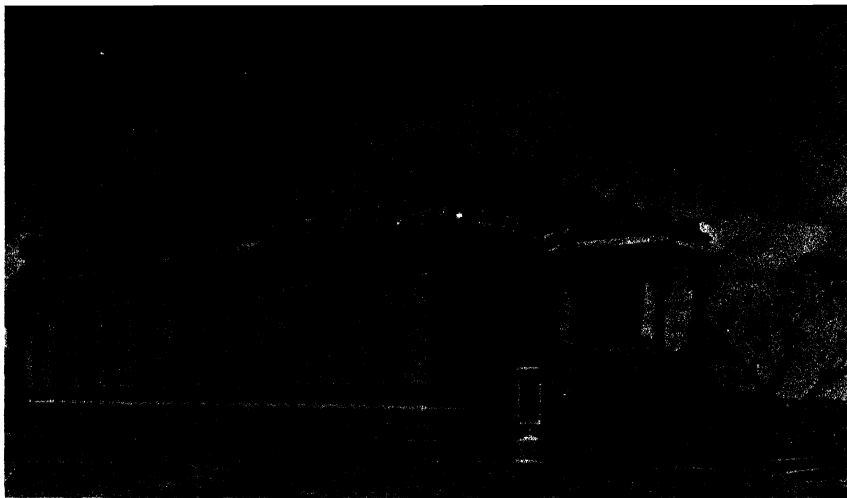
twelfth century with many associated with the Hoysala general Gangaraja as well as the Hoysala royal family itself.

At the foot of the hill on the south side is a rock commonly called Chamundaraya's rock The fanciful story of Chamundaraya's discovery of Bahubali already carved relates that he shot his arrow at Vindhyagiri from this rock and the mountain opened to reveal the mythical statue of Bahubali, which his brother Bharata had had carved

Chamundaraya Basti was built at the end of the tenth century by the Ganga general Chamundaraya. His inscriptions are quite short saying only that he built it, and presumably this temple must be roughly contemporary with the carving of the Bahubali statue on the big hill. The temple consists of two levels, the first enshrining a Neminatha and the roof shrine housing a Parshvanatha It is one of the most beautiful Ganga temples in the state and truly one of the glories of the site

The temple is entered through a pillared porch leading into a hall of sixteen columns, clustered into groups of four instead of being evenly spaced out This type of plan occurs in the early Chalukya period, a notable example being the eighth-century Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal This spacing of pillars is found also in the twelfth-century Kattale Basti nearby. At the back of the hall is a wide shallow vestibule with two pillars leading into the *garbhagriha* or shrine which houses the image of Neminatha the 22nd Jain Tirthankara flanked by male *chauri*-bearers. A number of the later temples at the site follow this usage and it is clearly a Ganga one since it is also found in the Jain Panchakuta Basti at Kambadahalli in Mandya District of *c.* A.D 900. Except for a few conservative examples at Shravana Belgola the post-Ganga temples in the area use square vestibules equal in size to the *garbhagriha.* In the vestibule of this temple on either side of the doorway are the figures of Sarvahna and Kushmandini, the yaksha and yakshi attendants of Neminatha

31a

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31b

The temple faces a bit north of true east The only other temple on the hill to which it corresponds is the Suparshvanatha Basti behind it

An inscription on the Parshvanatha image in the shrine of the second storey records that Jinadevana, the son of Chamundaraya, caused a temple to be built in c A D 995 It has often been taken to refer to the second storey of the Chamundaraya Basti, but the articulation of the two storeys is so close that it would be illogical to view each storey as of different dates The inscription must refer to some other building at the site.

It has been suggested that Echana, the son of the other great patron of the site, Gangaraja, rebuilt the temple according to an inscription on the pedestal of the Neminatha in the shrine The inscription of c A D 1138 must refer to another building and the Neminatha was moved here from some other place, its style is clearly Hoysala Chamundaraya's inscriptions are very clear and they flank the entrance on the basement of the temple

Shasana Basti bears that name due to the inscription stone slab set up conspicuously at its entrance. This long inscription is of much historical import. It records a grant of a village which lies northeast of Shravana Belgola by the Hoysala general Gangaraja for the upkeep of temples built by his mother Pochavve or Pochaladevi and his wife Lakshmidevi. The latter temple is probably the Eradukatte Basti, east of the Chamundaraya Basti, which was built by her The inscription also records that he built the compound wall

30 *Image of Neminatha*

31a *Sarvahana Yaksha*

b. *Kushmandini Yakshi*
The three images sculpted in Hoysala style appear to have replaced the original ones in Chamundaraya Basti

32 *Pillars,*
Kattale Basti, c. *A D 1118*

around the Bahubali on Vindhyagiri and many of the verses compare Gangaraja to the earlier patron of the site, Chamundaraya. Inscriptions on the shrine images of this *basti* and the Kattale Basti record that Gangaraja had the Kattale built for his mother Pochavve, and this Shasana Basti was perhaps erected for his wife Lakshmidevi, since the title of the *basti* in this epigraph, Indira-kulagriha or 'the abode of Lakshmi' relates to his wife's name. Gangaraja's mother's title Pochaladevi suggests that she was of the Hoysala royal family since the name Pochala is equivalent to Hoysala, and, at the same time his own name suggests that he was connected with the older Ganga family The long inscription at the entrance dates from c A D. 1118, so the temple must date from before that year

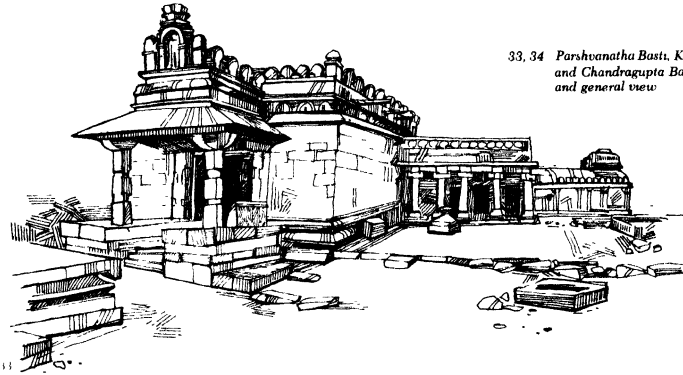
A curious feature of the plan is that it is not lined up with the Kattale Basti with which it must date It is the only *basti* on the rock which faces slightly south of due east. The interior of the temple is very similar to that of the Eradukatte Basti in the northeast corner of the enclosure, which was built by Lakshmidevi herself. The differences are found in the exterior where the Eradukatte is much plainer in articulation than the Shasana which follows the earlier Chamundaraya closely The use of the open vestibule recalls a similar usage in Ganga architecture In the case of the Chamundaraya Basti the vestibule is quite shallow while in these later *bastis* it is more square, but the usual Hoysala usage at other sites is a vestibule of the same dimensions of the cella and doorway to each of them Other early twelfth-century temples which follow this usage are the Shantishvara and Terina Bastis in the corner of the compound

We learn of Lakshmidevi's death from an inscription of A. D 1121 near the Eradukatte Basti Gangaraja's death is recorded in the inscription of the Parshvanatha Basti at Bastihalli at Halebid of A D 1133. In the inscription of his son Boppadeva, we learn that Vishnuvardhana gave the *basti* the name of Vijaya-Parshvanatha due to his important victory at Bankapura and the birth of a son at the time of the dedication of this *basti* in memory of Gangaraja

Kattale Basti is constructed near the centre of the compound It has one of the most complex plans of any temple at the site, having the only internal *pradakshinapatha*, internal circumambulatory path, at Shravana Belgola The shrine contains an image of Adinatha the first Jain Tirthankara flanked by male *chauri*-bearers

The temple was built by the Hoysala general Gangaraja in c. A. D 1118 and dedicated to his mother Pochavve The fact that it is of Hoysala patronage makes the *pradakshinapatha* even more peculiar since no temple built by them has such a feature The only temples remotely related to the site (but from much earlier and much farther north) are the temples built by the early Chalukyas of Badami, most notably the great temples at Pattadakal from the early eighth century The shrine is fronted by a four-pillared vestibule area and a sixteen-pillared *mandapa* with one entrance The pillars of this *mandapa* are not evenly spaced but clustered into four groups of four creating wider aisles on axis similar to the usage at the Virupaksha at Pattadakal, for instance This plan is also followed on the Chamundaraya Basti nearby, but it is clear that it functions less successfully for temples with only one entrance than for temples like the Virupaksha with three. Contemporary Hoysala temples with three entrances, as at Belur, space out the pillars evenly. This clustering of pillars points to the pronounced Dravida character of this architecture of Shravana Belgola.

32

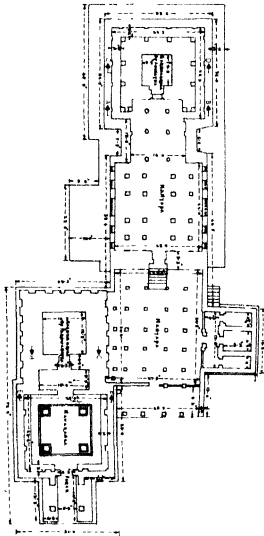
33, 34 *Parshvanatha Basti, Kattale Basti and Chandragupta Basti, plan and general view*

After the temple was completed a *mandapa* was added to the front of the temple linking it on one side with the Chandragupta Basti and on the other with the wall of the Parshvanatha Basti Due to this deep hall the interior of Kattale Basti is extremely dark, hence the name Kattale which means darkness Along with the Parshvanatha and Shantinatha Bastis this *basti* is oriented due east

During the early part of this century some sources claimed that the names of Kattale and Chandragupta Bastis had been switched and that the Kattale is actually the Chandragupta and vice versa Perhaps this was suggested because the Kattale is a much larger structure and viewed as more important The Chandragupta is clearly earlier in date and its location at the summit of the compound and its facing the great Bhadrabahu inscription to the south both confirm that it is indeed the Chandragupta

Chandragupta Basti is a small building which functions as an extension of the Kattale Basti, since a *mandapa* has been built in front of the Kattale and against the wall of the Parshvanatha Basti There is one entrance on the east side which serves for both the Kattale and the Chandragupta Bastis

The temple stands at the summit of the enclosure and tradition relates that it was built by Chandragupta Maurya Stylistically that cannot be the case, since it must date from Ganga times being perhaps a bit earlier than Chamundaraya Basti to the north of it It consists of a shallow vestibule which opens into three shrine chambers, the middle one being much wider than the other two, an image of Parshvanatha being in the centre with Padmavati and Kushmandini to the east and west The entire structure faces south This is probably due to its placement facing the famous Bhadrabahu inscription on the rock face of the hill which is just south of the Parshvanatha Basti.

Although there is little substantiation of the story, it is widely held that Chandragupta Maurya accompanied Bhadrabahu to the south and that they both died on the hill Whereas Bhadrabahu is mentioned in the inscription, which may date from as early as the fourth century A. D , Chandragupta is mentioned only in the very late epigraphs No inscription records the building of this *basti*

Sometime in the twelfth century a doorway was added to the front of the vestibule with a screen on each side The screens illustrate many incidents

35 *Yaksha*, c. *early tenth century Chandragupta Basti*

36 *Screen, with carved panels, c. twelfth century, Chandragupta Basti*

37 *Chandragupta Basti, back elevation early tenth century, Ganga period*

of the lives of both Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta. One of the screens bears the inscription of the artist Dasoja. The name appears elsewhere at the site in an inscription of A. D. 1145 and perhaps it can be taken to refer to the same artist. It is a common name in the area since an artist of that name, who hailed from Balligrame, the present Belgami in Shimoga District, worked on the Channakeshava at Belur around this time with his son Chavana.

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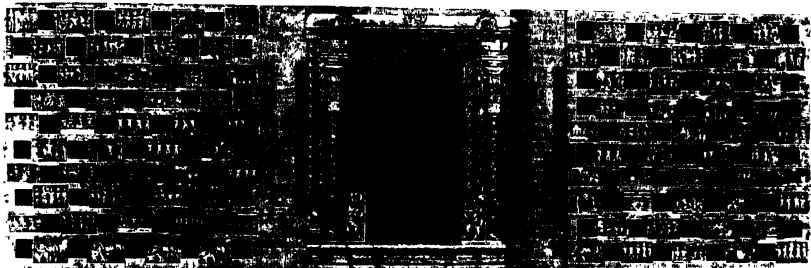
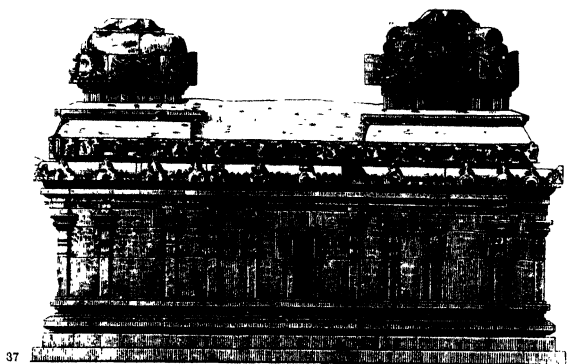

38 *Parshvanatha Basti with manasthambha, early twelfth century. The manasthambha was erected c. late seventeenth century*

39 *Parshvanatha image, Parshvanatha Basti*

Parshvanatha Basti is one of the most impressive *bastis* at the site. It enshrines an image of Parshvanatha which is about 5 metres tall, the tallest image on the hill

The temple consists of a *garbhagriha* fronted by a shallow vestibule and a large four-pillared hall and covered porch The use of a doorway to the shallow vestibule suggests a Hoysala date along with the majority of the bastis on the hill since the Ganga usage is an open one The shallow dimensions are closer to those of Ganga architecture than the square shape usually found in buildings of Hoysala patronage The orientation of the temple due east suggests that it was built close to the Kattale Basti in date since these two *bastis* and the Shantinatha in the south-west corner of the enclosure are the only three temples on the rock which face due east The temple probably dates along with the Kattale to the early twelfth century

In the pillared hall of the temple is an impressive *nishidhi* stone dated A. D 1129

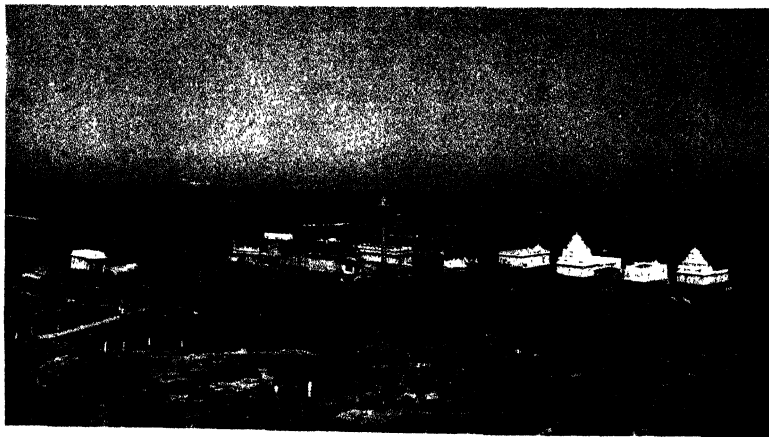
There is a tall *manasthambha* placed on axis in front of the temple It appears to have been erected by some local merchants during the reign of Chikka-devaraja Odeyar, who ruled from A. D 1672 to 1704. The four shrines at the top house two yakshas and two yakshis rather than Jinas

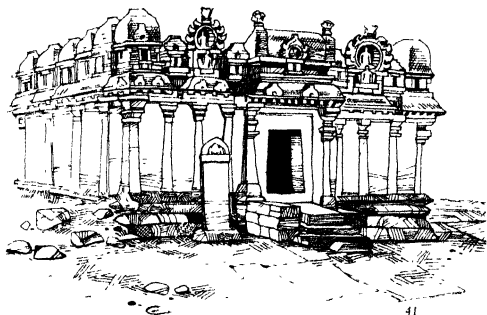
Majjigana Basti besides the Chandragupta Basti is the only temple on the hill that faces south The Chandragupta was probably oriented towards the Bhadrabahu inscription, while being placed at the summit of this portion of the hill but, the orientation of the Majjigana Basti is hard to account for It is rare for any temple whether Hindu or Jain to be oriented south and only shrines of a rather ghoulish nature are so directed at contemporary sites such as at Doddagaddavalli in Hassan District

There is no inscription which records the construction of this temple, but the name Majjigana suggests that it may have been the name of the person who commissioned it The *garbhagriha* is not quite square and attached to an open vestibule fronted by a *navaranga* or nine-ceilinged-four-pillared hall much like the Terina Basti of c. A D 1117 on the same hill A major difference in plan is the way exterior walls of the cella are indented from that of the *mandapa*, a feature seen in the Savatigandhavarana and Shantishvara Bastis in the north-east corner, but not in the Eradukatte and Terina Bastis in the same corner of the enclosure The exterior walls of the Majjigana Basti are decorated with a band of stylized flowers unlike any other wall treatment at the site

This *basti* enshrines an Anantanatha image and must date from the early twelfth century along with the group in the corner

Eradukatte Basti is one of the four *bastis* in the north-east corner of the enclosure that are oriented a little east of north and not towards true north The *garbhagriha* enshrines an Adinatha and it was built by the Hoysala general Gangaraja's wife Lakshmidevi in A D c 1118 This temple may be the one which is mentioned in Gangaraja's inscription at the front of the

40 *Temples on summit of Chandragiri Hill, general view*

41 *Shasana Basti, A D 1121*

42 *Yakshi image, Savati-Gandhavarana Basti, A D 1123*

Shasana Basti, so it would date from before his grant Perhaps the inscription recording the dedication of the Shasana Basti means that Gangaraja built the Shasana Basti for his wife, but an inscription near the Eradukatte records that she died by *samadhi* in A D 1121 It is unlikely that a temple would be built for a person before her death

The plan of the temple is curiously like that of the Shasana Basti although the articulation of the walls is plainer Both plans display a long *mandapa* of six pillars with an open vestibule at the end after the Ganga fashion Like its neighbours the temple is fronted with a platform, which in this case has two staircases, hence the name *eradu* (two) *katte* (stairs)

Savatigandhavarana Basti is similar to the other *bastis* of this corner in having a platform to the front of it It was built by the queen Shantaladevi, the wife of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana in A D 1123 and it derives its name from one of her titles, 'a rutting elephant among co-wives' It enshrines a Shantinatha image probably chosen due to its association with the name Shantala, and inscriptions record that it was set up with the temple An inscription on *nishidhi* stones in an open pavilion nearby records her death at Shivaganga in A D 1131 and that of her mother at Shravana Belgola by *sallekana* in the same year.

The plan of this *basti* is different from the other three *bastis* of this corner with which it is closely related in that the *mandapa* is composed of eight pillars, which is a doubling of the usual four of a typical *navaranga*, and

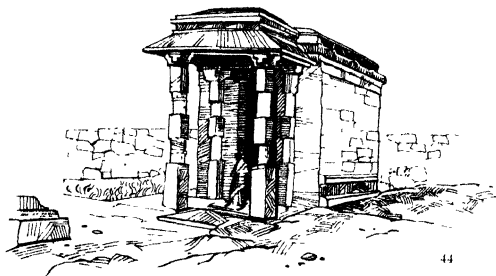
the use of a doorway to the vestibule rather than the open vestibule after the Ganga usage

The story is often told of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana's conversion from Jainism by the Shri Vaishnava reformer Ramanuja, although there is evidence for his Hindu faith prior to the introduction of the new doctrine into Karnataka It is clear from this dedication and the suicide of her mother that Shantala remained Jain but it must also be pointed out that the second Vaishnava temple, the Chennagaraya, in the compound of the Chennakeshava at Belur of A D 1117 was built by the queen These two buildings built by the same person point out that the communal differences so stressed in later times were of little import in the early twelfth century Shantala could obviously be a devoted Jain and revere the Hindu gods as well The two religions co-existed both within the kingdom and the hearts of the people

Terina Basti is similar to the Shantishvara Basti next to it in plan, although the whole temple is placed on a platform which encircles it Besides the Odegal Basti on Vindhyagiri it is the only temple at the site which has a platform around it It is a curious addition suggesting circumambulation of the temple, not to be expected since none of the other temples have the platforms Platforms are found in many of the Hoysala temples of the area, but they are only found on temples of a very specific stylistic kind, a kind never used for Jain temples Most of the Hoysala examples date from the first half of the thirteenth century with the great temples at Belur and Halebid the only examples in the twelfth century

This *basti* is named due to the small shrine shaped like a temple car (*teru*) in front of the temple which was erected by two mothers of merchants in A D 1117 The inscription on the *teru* records that they also had a temple erected, but whether this *basti* is the one mentioned is unclear

43 Teru in front of Terina Basti, A D 1117

44 Shantisvara Basti, c early twelfth century

The *basti* houses a Bahubhai image and is referred to as Bahubali Basti also. It faces slightly off north like the other temples in this corner

Shantishvara Basti faces slightly east of north as do the other temples of the north-east corner of the enclosure It enshrines an image of Shantinatha Similar to the temples of this corner group there is a platform to the front of the temple which is approached by a flight of stairs An early chronicler of the site suggested that Shantaladevi, the chief queen of Vishnuvardhana Hoysala, built this temple and that it should date with her Savatigandhavarana Basti to A D 1123, but the inscriptional evidence is lacking to support this belief and it is unclear when it was built In any case it must date with the entire corner group despite lack of inscriptional proof

The pillared hall of the temple now has an odd arrangement of pillars, but most likely it originally had the usual four pillars, and the interior of the temple was much like the Majjigana Basti with a *navaranga* and an open vestibule after the Ganga fashion

Chandraprabha Basti is the only structure at the site which is oriented a bit west of north, while the group in the north-west corner of the enclosure is off the true north in the other direction There is no inscription which records when it was built. It enshrines the image of Chandraprabha, the 8th Tirthankara, and the plan closely resembles that of the Parshvanatha Basti, only, it is built on a smaller scale. It probably dates to the early twelfth century as do the *bastis* of the main group at the centre of the compound.

Suparshvanatha Basti is the only temple at the site that lines up with the Chamundaraya Basti slightly north of due east in orientation It is a simple building much like the early twelfth century Shantinatha Basti at the opposite corner of the compound. Although the image is called

Suparshvanatha it is more accurately a depiction of Parshvanatha since the Jina is shielded by a seven-hooded serpent instead of a five-hooded one There is no inscription which gives the date or patronage of the building or even a name to the image, but the articulation of the exterior walls is in keeping with an early date It can perhaps be taken with the Chamundaraya Basti since it lines up with it, and dates from the end of the tenth century

Shantinatha Basti is a small temple composed of shrine chamber and vestibule with a pillared porch all of almost equal dimensions It seems to parallel the earlier Suparshvanatha Basti at the other corner of the compound It probably dates with the Kattale and Parshvanatha Bastis since it lines up with them and is oriented due east The Chandragupta and Majjigana Bastis are the only other two temples on the hill which are aligned on a true axis, both facing due south.

This *basti* enshrines a Shantinatha image which is about 3 6 metres tall and is one of the tallest at the site The *basti* is most noted for the vestiges of painting in the *garbhagriha* which suggests that its walls and ceiling were once ornately painted

Mahanavami Mandapa actually consists of two open four-pillared *mandapas* placed side by side They house inscription pillars ranging in date but primarily from the second half of the twelfth century One of the pillars is among the most ornate at the site similar to those in the Siddhara Basti on Vindhyagiri

There are four other *mandapas* containing inscribed pillars though of ordinary workmanship one to the south of the Chamundaraya Basti, one to the east of Eradukatte Basti and two standing side by side to the south of Terina Basti

45 *Mahanavami Mandapa*

Bharata Image, a curiosity on the hill is a huge statue of Bharata, the brother of Bahubali, which stands about 2 8 metres high The complete figure would have been a lot taller since it is only completed to the knees He faces west which is now a bit awkward since the western wall of the compound is quite nearby

46 Statue of Bharata

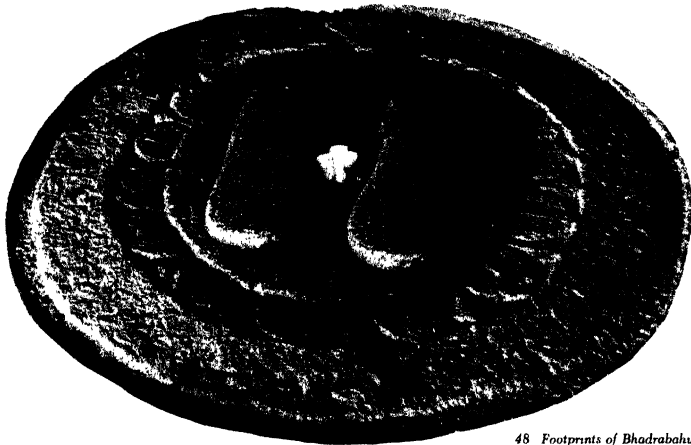
46

It has been suggested that an inscription of c A. D 900 engraved on the rock near the image records that the sculptor was one Arittonemi; but, it is clear from the inscription that he must be a donor since his name in no way agrees with the names used by sculptors of the area Their names usually end in -oja as in the case of the Dasoja who sculpted the screens of the Chandragupta Basti

Bharata is similar in posture to the colossus on the other hill and may date from about the same time The orientation to the west may indicate that the figure is early since the site definitely grew to the east and north in later times It is hard to make a firm judgement based on style since throughout the Jain period of Karnataka, body types and proportions varied little for standing nude figures

Kuge Brahmadeva Pillar stands near the entrance to the compound on the smaller hill just south of the Bhadrabahu inscription on the rock face This is the earliest datable monument on the rock since it bears an inscription of A D 974 recording the death of the Ganga king Marasimha II

There are two very different pillar types known in the Jain tradition in Karnataka Of these the first type is the Brahmadeva pillar supporting an image of Brahmadeva Dr S Settar has suggested that the yakshas which are found on these pillars are actually representations of the Sarvahna yaksha but the pillars are invariably named for Brahmadeva regardless of the accuracy of that identification The second pillar type is the great *manasthambhas* found in front of many of the Jain *bastis* throughout the state One such *manasthambha* stands in front of the Parshvanatha Basti at this site *Manasthambhas* are topped with a pavilion with four shrines facing the cardinal points each usually housing an image of the Jina

47 Bhadrabahu Cave

48 Footprints of Bhadrabahu

Bhadrabahu Cave is a small natural cavern housing footprints believed to be of Bhadrabahu It is located near the summit of the rock outside the compound a little distance away towards the east of the enclosure. Tradition informs us that the great Jain leader Bhadrabahu died in this cave with only Chandragupta Maurya as his sole companion A pillared portico has been added at the door in recent times

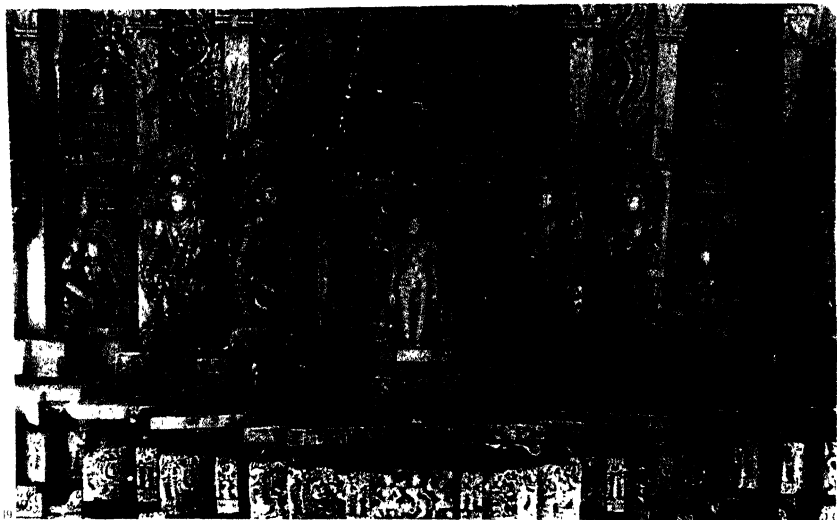
One of the earliest lithic records at the site is situated on Chandragiri in the centre of the compound just south of the Parshvanatha Basti and is known as the Bhadrabahu inscription It may date from the fourth century A D , but clearly does not come to us from the time of Bhadrabahu What it records is an early tradition stating that Bhadrabahu died here on Chandragiri. A much later inscription dating from the twelfth century, which is no longer in the cave, stated that the footprints were those of Bhadrabahu.

Iruve Brahmadeva Basti is found to the north of the compound near the Kanchinadone, 'bell-metal pond' It is a small cubic temple and perhaps dates from the tenth century as indicated by fragmentary inscriptions on the doorway This small structure faces west and is dedicated to Brahmadeva.

Jinanathapura

Jinanathapura is a suburb of Shravana Belgola situated to the north of the smaller hill. It appears to have been founded in the early twelfth century when the site was greatly extended, judging from an inscription at the Aregal Basti close to the road leading to Jinanathapura from the town proper The Shantishvara Basti built here is one of the great glories of Jain art in the area and is the only *basti* built in the ornate Hoysala manner.

Aregal Basti is so named since it is built on rock (*aregal*) It faces northwest and it enshrines a white marble Parshvanatha which was dedicated in

49

49-50 Shantishvara Basti at Jinanathapura plan, elevation, end of twelfth century

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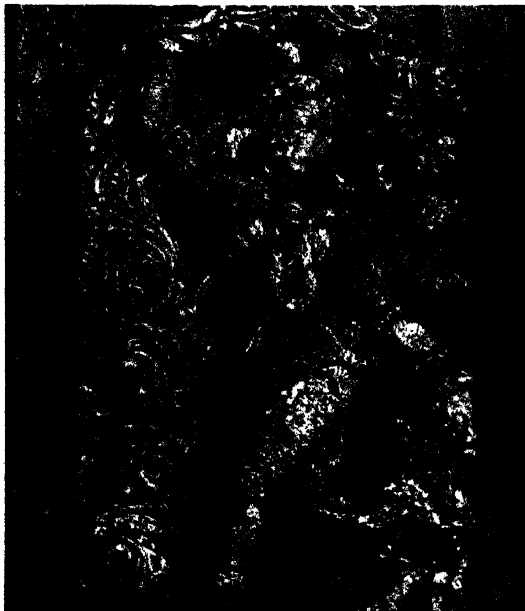
A. D. 1889 by the residents of Shravana Belgola being made as a replacement for the original image which had broken and now lies in the tank nearby The temple itself is a simple building consisting of the usual *navaranga* with vestibule and shrine at the back It dates from c A D 1135.

Shantishvara Basti was built by Rechimayya, the general of the Hoysala king Ballala II, sometime at the end of the twelfth century

It is the only Jain building which displays the ornate style found in many of the Hoysala buildings throughout southern Karnataka As seen from the other *bastis* at Shravana Belgola, the Jains preferred a much more conservative style of architecture usually following the Ganga traditions of the area The only *basti* which is close to the Shantishvara is the Akkana Basti at the foot of Chandragiri The plans of the two temples are quite similar pointing to the parallels between what is called Late Chalukya and Hoysala in style The Shantishvara Basti follows what has often been called the Koravangala version of the Hoysala style and is not nearly as ornate as the temples which follow the Hoysaleshvara at Halebid, which have carved friezes in place of these simpler basement mouldings

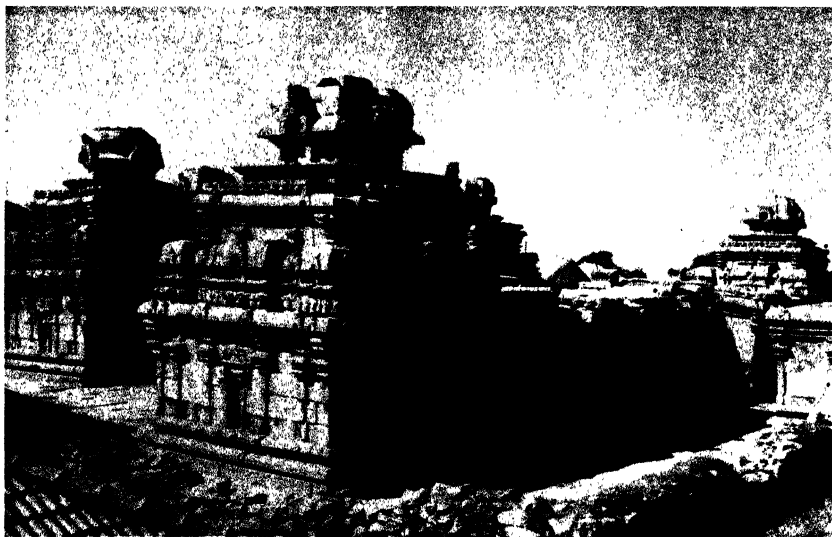
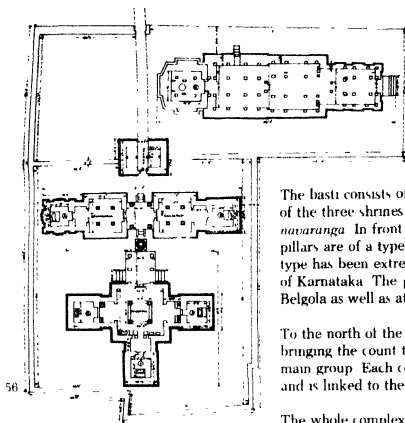
52

51-52. Figurines on the external wall, Shantishvara Basti Jinanathapura c end of twelfth century

53 *Tirthankara Shantinatha with chauri-bearers, Shantishvara Basti at Jinanathapura, end of twelfth century*

54 *Jina figure, Shantishvara Basti at Jinanathapura, c end of twelfth century*

Kambadahalli

One of the oldest sites in Karnataka, about 20 kilometers from Shravana Belgola, is Kambadahalli, named due to the prominent placement of a Brahmadeva pillar (*kamba*) at the north-west corner of the town. Near this pillar are two important shrines, the Panchakuta Basti and the Shantinatha Basti. Both of these temples date from the Ganga period in part, but it is clear that each of them has been altered and expanded after their initial building.

Panchakuta Basti is one of the most beautiful of the Dravidian structures built in the Ganga idiom in Karnataka. Along with the Chamundaraya Basti on Chandragiri at Shravana Belgola, it can be considered the greatest temple of the period. The archaeological reports have dated the temple to c. A.D. 900, but a broader date of the tenth century would be a more accurate assessment owing to the lack of inscriptional evidence. Since the Chamundaraya Basti is from the end of the century and is built in the same style as the Panchakuta Basti, this Kambadahalli temple could easily date from the end of the century.

55 ***Panchakuta Basti, Kambadahalli c. tenth century***

56 *Panchakuta Basti and Shantinatha Basti, plan, Kambadahalli*

57 *Brahmadeva Pillar, Panchakuta Basti, Kambadahalli, c early tenth century*

58 *Jina, Shantinatha Basti Kambadahalli, c early twelfth century*

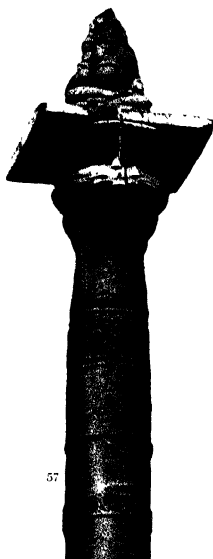
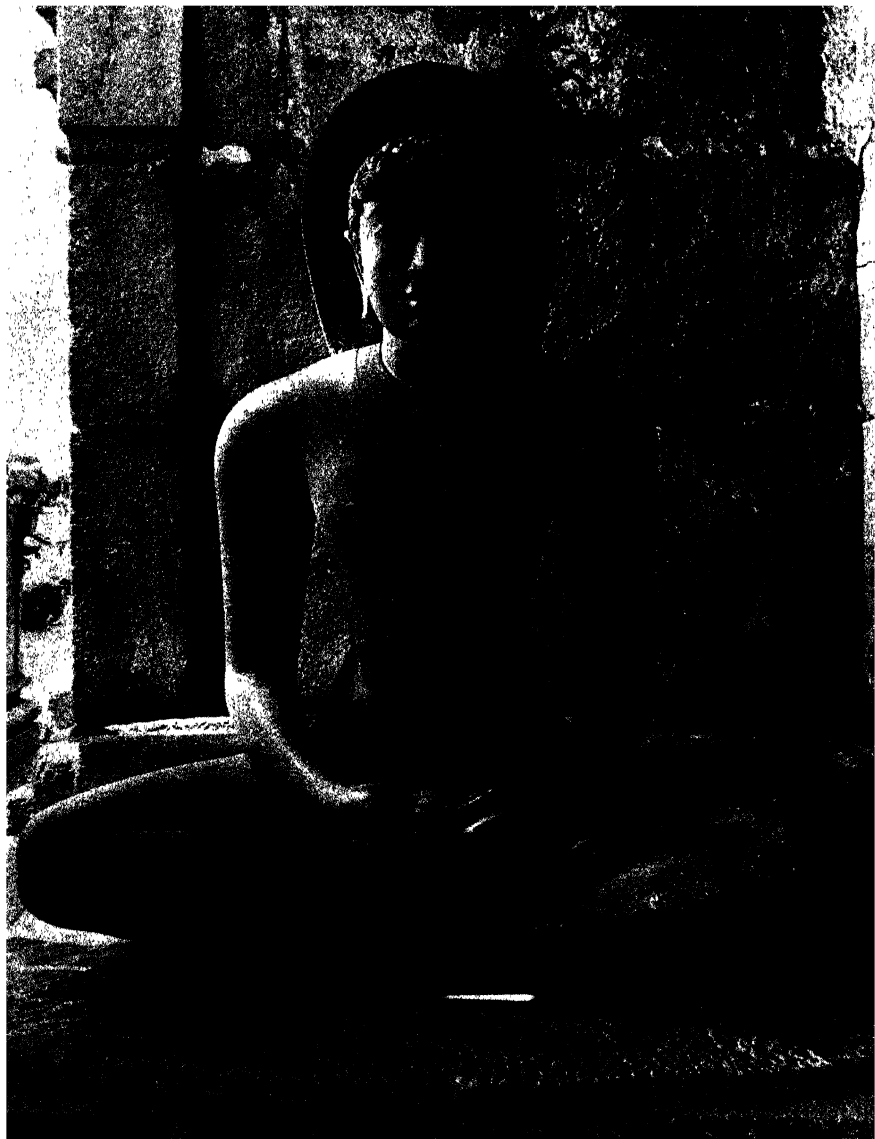
The basti consists of the *trikutachala*, three-shrined, temple where each of the three shrines has its own vestibule and is linked to a common *navaranga* In front of the whole is placed a porch of later date, since the pillars are of a type popular during the twelfth century. This *trikutachala* type has been extremely popular throughout the history of architecture of Karnataka The plan is found at the Odegal Basti on Vindhyagiri at Shravana Belgola as well as at a number of other Jain sites throughout the state

To the north of the group of three shrines are placed two more shrines, bringing the count to five These two temples flank the axis leading to the main group Each consists of a shrine chamber, a vestibule and pillared hall, and is linked to the other by a common porch

The whole complex is oriented to the north towards the Brahmadeva pillar from which the town derives its name The main shrine, the southern one, houses an Adinatha image The present image appears to be later since it is carved of soapstone and not granite like the other images at the temple It has been suggested that the newer image was added in c A D 1167 by a Ganga general of the Hoysalas and that the original image now resides elsewhere at the complex The flanking cells of the main group house a Neminatha in the east and a Shantinatha in the west The two flanking cells to the north of the *trikutachala* each house an image of a Tirthankara

The pillars of the eastern flanking temple are of a later variety and suggest that the two temples were added to the original *trikutachala* Despite this different treatment in the interior of one of the shrines, the external details of all five shrines are extremely similar They all fall within the Ganga idiom of the region It must be noted that there is considerable intentional variety of form found on these five shrines, while the over-all details are handled in a uniform fashion In the group of three the main shrine has a square crowning element, the east shrine has a round one and the west shrine has an octagonal one The wall articulation of the three is identical and the other two temples are treated in a very similar fashion

There is a very simple explanation for this uniform architecture of the whole It simply illustrates the fact that the Ganga style of architecture was the desired building styles of the Jains. This is seen at all of the later Jain *bastis* at Shravana Belgola, which ignored the developing Hoysala style of the nearby capitals of Belur and Halebid Judging from a temple such as the Shasana Basti on Chandragiri at Shravana Belgola it is quite clear that the twin *bastis* flanking the axis leading to the main group at Kambadahalli could easily date from the early twelfth century

Shantinatha Basti, the other major *basti* at the site, is also a complex building which reflects various phases It is or was actually a twin temple, each facing the other with a pillared hall which was built between the two at a later date. This pillared hall is noted for its high basement with a number of ornamental mouldings The top moulding is sculpted with a wide variety of forms ranging from horses and elephants with riders to lions and *yalis* Many of these figures are highly naturalistic and sculpted with great detail, rivalling the friezes which decorate the great Hoysala temples of the state.

59 *Dvarapala Shantinatha Basti Kambadahalli c early twelfth century*

60 *Chauri-bearer, detail from main image of Tirthankara with chauri-bearer, Panchakuta Basti Kambadahalli c early tenth century*

60

The western end of the temple is the Shantinatha Basti proper since it houses an image of Shantinatha, about 3 metres tall, placed on an octagonal stand in a very large *garbhagriha* This is clearly the oldest section of this group At the eastern end is an old *basti* consisting of a *garbhagriha*, vestibule, and *navaranga* The back wall of the *garbhagriha* has been opened up to make an entrance to the building This must have been done at some later date after the addition of the pillared hall between the two *bastis*, to allow an on-axis entrance leading to the shrine of Shantinatha

This pillared hall between the two older structures has an entrance on the north, which must have been the sole entrance to the complex for some time An inscription found at this entrance records that this later section was built by Boppa, the son of the Hoysala general Gangaraja, the important patron at Shravana Belgola The inscription is much effaced, but the phrase 'Gangaraja's son Bo " suggests that this must be Boppa who built the Parshvanatha Basti at Bastihalli in Halebid in A D 1133 in memory of his father The inscription dates from c A D 1128

As is the case with the Panchakuta Basti, there are many lovely sculptures housed within this temple, including many images of the Jinas and their yakshas and yakshis

— ROBERT J DEL BONTA

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The Art Treasures
of Shravana Belgola

The Ambiance

The importance of Shravana Belgola as a religious place of the Jains goes back to ancient times, to the third century B C. when the Jain *acharya* Shrutakevalin Bhadrabahu came from distant Pataliputra to the southern regions with 12,000 followers. According to prevailing legends, when they reached the place now known as Shravana Belgola, Bhadrabahu, sensing that his end was near, bade farewell to, and dismissed the *samgha* in its entirety, and 'in company with a single disciple, mortifying his body on the wide expanse of the cold rocks, accomplished *samadhi* on the Chandragiri Hill

This disciple was none other than the Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, who continued to live on this hill worshipping the foot-prints of his preceptor, and, according to an early inscription, 'was served by forest deities' Chandragupta Maurya, like his *guru* died observing *sallekhana*, 'and in course of time', informs the earliest inscription incised on the dark rock surface of the Chandragiri hill at Shravana Belgola, 'seven hundred *rishis* similarly accomplished *samadhi*' Numerous other engravings on the hill testify that the tradition continued in the following centuries; many ordained and lay persons repaired to this holy hill to pass their last days and attained *samadhi-marana* at this sacred spot.

It is significant to note that during this period there was no other activity accompanying this intense religious activity there were no temples being built nor images being carved in the hills In fact, the impression conveyed by the early inscriptions is that Shravana Belgola was a holy place but not a place of pilgrimage It was a spot rendered sacred by the austere penance and the *samadhi-marana* of Bhadrabahu as well as of Chandragupta Maurya and many *rishis*. It was as if the hillock itself became holy because of its close association with penance-practising persons, it imbibed and absorbed some of their spiritual qualities And by virtue of this property it became sacred attracting more and more individuals wishing to observe the ritual of *sallekhana*. The atmosphere of the place, though intensely spiritual, was linked with death This is clearly suggested by the name *Katavapra* given to the hill, meaning the sepulchral mound or the hillock of tombs

The Inspiration

This scene at Shravana Belgola seems to change in the tenth century when Chamundaraya, the mighty warrior and minister of the kings of the Ganga dynasty commissioned the colossal statue of Bahubali to be sculpted on the bigger hill called Indragiri. On the smaller hill, the *Katavapra*, known as the Chandragiri hill after Chandragupta Maurya, Chamundaraya built a magnificent piece of architecture, the Chamundaraya Basadi. Perhaps he chose this spot on the hill as there was already a tiny temple existing there known as the Chandragupta Basadi and reputed to have been built by Chandragupta Maurya when he lived on the mountain. The present structure certainly does not date from the third century B C. but represents a temple built sometime in the ninth or tenth century, possibly over some ancient shrine that may have fallen into disrepair

Further, in the *Bhujabali Charita*, a Kannada text of A.D. 1614, it is written that at the time of the consecration of the Gommateshvara statue in A D. 981, Chamundaraya founded the village at the foot of the hill and granted for the Lord a large number of villages. The *Sthala Purana*, a nineteenth-century Kannada text, mentions that Chamundaraya repaired the ruined temples, appointed Siddhacharya as *guru* of the *matha* and granted land for the worship of Lord Gommateshvara.

It is believed that there was a line of *gurus* at this place from the time of Bhadrabahusvami. There may also have been a *matha* at Shravana Belgola, probably established sometime in the

early medieval period, along with similar institutions in other parts of Karnataka However, its activities appear to have been limited to spiritual matters In the tenth century it seems to have received a new impetus in its activities when Chamundaraya commissioned the carving of the colossus on the Indragiri hill and built the temple on Chandragiri hill, its sphere of interest seems to broaden considerably

The Jain *mathas*, particularly in Karnataka, were important institutions which played a pivotal part in the lives of the people For, they were not only centres for religious affairs but also for social and cultural activities The *mathadhipati*, known also as the *bhattaraka*, was the head of the institution, be it a temple or a large pilgrimage place

The *bhattaraka* was not only the religious mentor of his followers but was also the chief custodian of the temple and the religious establishments connected with it His duties revolved around supervising and directing consecration ceremonies of images, conducting *pujas* and other rituals, as well as administering religious sacraments at the time of births, marriages and deaths He was, moreover, in charge of the temple buildings and the various objects contained therein as well as their protection, maintenance, repairs and renovation

In addition to all this, the *bhattaraka* looked after the administration and management of all properties and lands received as donations It was, in fact, the involvement in the organizational work of the religious establishments or *tirtha-kshetras* that set the *bhattaraka* apart from other ascetics of the Jain faith

More often than not the *bhattarakas* functioned as the fountainhead of religious and cultural activities Usually men of erudition and learning, they spent their time usefully in writing commentaries on difficult texts and composing stories which elucidated abstract philosophical dogmas With patience and perseverance they collected works on diverse topics like logic, grammar, mathematics, medicines and astrology, and set up libraries in the *matha* or temple Their temple-libraries became storehouses of knowledge

The *bhattaraka*, because of his close contact with his followers was able to channelize, successfully, the piety of the people into the building of temples and making endowments to them He also encouraged members of his congregation to enrich the temple with gifts of images as well as manuscripts for spiritual enlightenment Also, at the time of consecration ceremonies and other religious festivals the *bhattarakas* organized processions and celebrations which became occasions of social gatherings and rejoicings with music, singing, dancing and dramatic performances In this way the *bhattaraka matha* provided patronage to the performing arts as well as to painting, sculpture, the decorative and minor arts and contributed significantly in promoting and preserving knowledge as also cultural values

The Expression

To the revival of the *matha* as well as the munificent patronage forthcoming from leading figures of Karnataka, then, can be attributed the prolific artistic activity that took place in the next two centuries And though numerous persons continued to come to Shravana Belgola for *samadhi-marana* the place no longer wore a mournful air It was transformed, animated with many craftsmen building temples in the town as well as on the two hills where marks incised indelibly on the rock surface supposedly record their attendance Several of the stone images, now enshrined in the temples, belong to this period as also some of the beautiful bronze icons housed in the Jain *matha* Painting too appears to be patronized at this time

1 Folios from palm-leaf manuscripts of the Shatakhandagama, Mahabandha *and* Kashayapahuda *A D 1113-1120*
Provenance probably Shravana Belgola
Collection Jain Matha, Mudbidri

The Collections

Apart from the art objects produced by artists at Shravana Belgola, the temples particularly the *matha* contain many images and manuscripts that have been received as offerings from devout pilgrims Most of them are from various parts of south India executed in cognate idioms There are also some objects in private homes in Shravana Belgola which the Jain *matha* hopes to acquire some day and display in a museum it plans to establish on the occasion of the 'Bahubali Pratishtapana Sahasrabdhi Mahotsava' organized in A D 1981

The art treasures of Shravana Belgola cover a wide range which encompasses miniature paintings, wall-paintings, and icons made of brass and of *panchadhatu* — an alloy formed with five metals — brass, gold, silver, copper and tin

Miniature Painting

Palm Leaf Manuscripts

The early manuscripts are written on folios of palm-leaf Then, around the twelfth century, paper was employed and by the fourteenth century became the favoured carrier for transcribed texts In certain areas like south India and Orissa the custom of using palm leaf as carrier for manuscripts was never wholly abandoned until recently

The Shatakhandagama, Mahabandha and Kashayapahuda (Fig 1)
c A D 1113-1125 Probably Shravana Belgola,
The Jain Matha, Mudbidri

Originally at Shravana Belgola, this set of three manuscripts is now in the Jain *matha* at Mudbidri It is said that they used to be stored in the Siddhanta Basadi at Shravana Belgola until one of the *bhattarakas* took them with him to Mudbidri in the coastal region of Karnataka The *bhattaraka* never returned to Shravana Belgola, he stayed at Mudbidri and founded the *matha* there Since that time the manuscripts have remained in the collection of the Jain *matha* at Mudbidri These manuscripts are also known as *Dhavala*, *Mahadhavala* and *Jayadhavala* from the titles of the commentaries written on them They deal with the *karma* philosophy of the Jains and together they represent the Digambara Jain Philosophy in its entirety The *Prakrit* text alternating with Sanskrit is transcribed in the Kannada script

The illustrations represent Jain gods and goddesses, monks and devotees There are, besides, some formal and conventional motifs of lotuses and lotus medallions framed in borders of geometrical and scroll designs These illustrations, like those in the contemporary Buddhist manuscripts from eastern India and the Jain manuscripts from western India are iconographical in intent with an esoteric rather than aesthetic content They bear no relationship to the text and appear to have been inserted there to enhance its value and impart a magical potency to the manuscript And it is in such representations that we notice the beginnings of a concept which developed into the complicated *mandalas* of later times

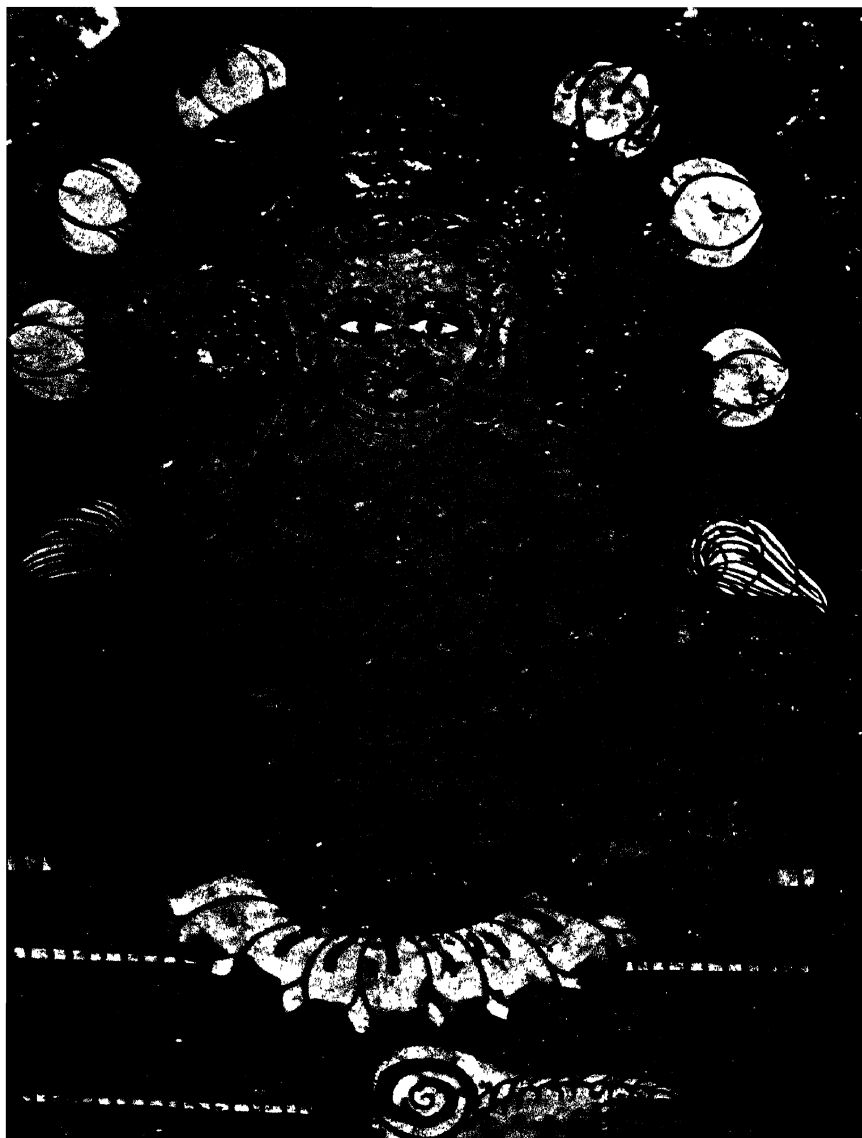
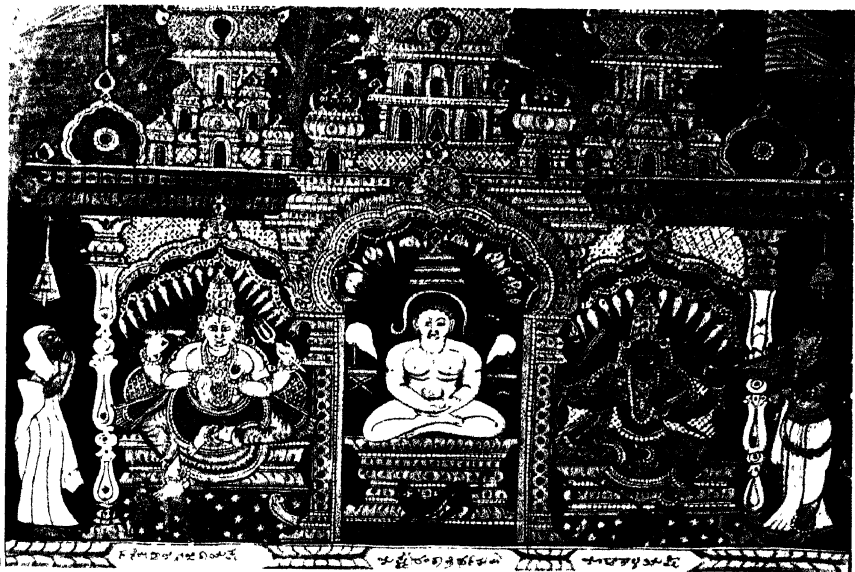
The figures of gods and goddesses, rotund *yakshas* and worshipful devotees are delineated in swift almost calligraphic strokes but without negating the plasticity and the physical volume of the human figure The restricted pallette invests the paintings with a certain gravity appropriate to their function as meditational supports

The style of these paintings, with its limited colour-scheme, emphasis on linear rendering, exaggeratedly angular postures and the motif of the farther protruding eye, clearly indicate that it has many points in common with the Western Indian Style of Painting as it prevailed in Gujarat At the same time, unlike the style in Gujarat and Rajasthan, it exhibits a greater feeling for the corporeality of human form The faces of the figures, in many cases, reveal a different ethnic type than that portrayed in contemporaneous painting from western India

One of these manuscripts — *Shatakhandagama* — bears the date of A D 1113, and on the basis of the close parallels manifested in such aspects as the size, the style of writing and painting, the other two manuscripts — the *Mahabandha* and the *Kashayapahuda* — can also be attributed to a period of c A D 1113-1125 The three manuscripts appear to be a set, and must have been produced as such

The unusually large size of the palm-leaf folios, and the studied elegance of the letters indicate that the manuscripts are copies commissioned by a member of some royal or aristocratic family It has been suggested that, perhaps, the patron was Queen Shantala Devi, wife of King Vishnuvardhana, a devout Jain who continued to adhere to the faith even after her husband had converted to Hinduism She built a temple at Shravana Belgola and it is possible that she ordered these manuscripts and presented them to the *bhattaraka* at Shravana Belgola For, in those days, religious texts were not ordered for private pleasure but for social good so that the faithful could benefit from the learning contained in the treatise

It is, however, more likely that the patron who commissioned these manuscripts was Ganga Raja the military general and Chief Minister of the Hoysala king, Vishnuvardhana (A D 1108-1142) Historians group him with Chamundaraya and Hulla Raja as the triumverate who promoted Jainism in Karnataka Ganga Raja built the cloister around Gommateshvara

Miniature Painting of the Samavasarana
End of nineteenth century, Mysore School
Collection: A. Jwalniah, Shravana Belgola

3 *Tirthankara*
Detail from a glass painting
Nineteenth century, Mysore School
Collection A Jwalmah, Shravana Belgola

4 *Tirthankara Pushpadanta with*
attendant deities and devotees
Nineteenth century, Mysore School
Collection A Jwalmah, Shravana Belgola

5

5 *Mural in the Jain Matha at Shravana Belgola*
A D 1750-1775 or A D 1825-1850
Mysore School
The past and present births of Parshvanatha

Panel depicting the story of Parshva's first birth as Marubhuta
Before Parshva was born as Tirthankara his soul had to pass through many births In one of them he was born as Marubhuta, the son of the Brahmin minister of King Aravinda and the younger brother of evil Kamatha

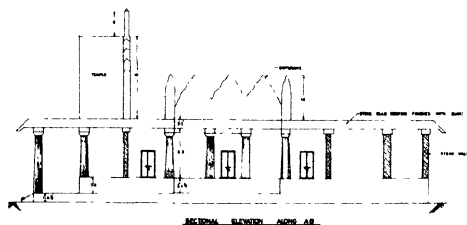
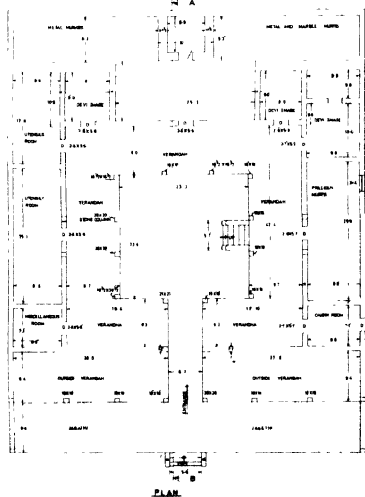
Once King Aravinda invited Marubhuta to accompany him on a military expedition While the king was away with Marubhuta Kamatha declared himself king Also seeing the beauty of Marubhuta's wife he was consumed with lust. He tricked her into meeting him and raped her

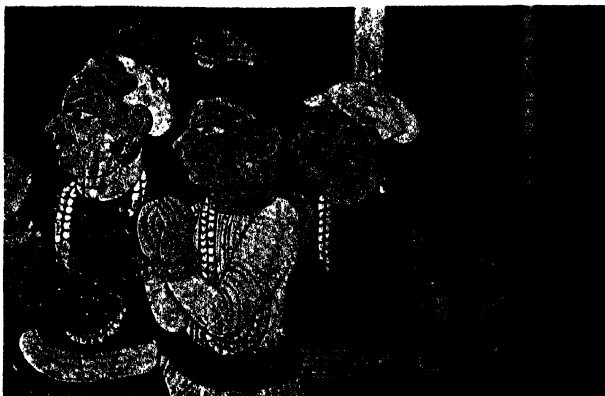
When King Aravinda returned from his expedition, he heard about Kamatha's misbehaviour and sentenced him to be tied shorn of his hair while little boys urinated on him He was then paraded around on a donkey in the town and little boys threw stones at him

This humiliation enraged Kamatha and he left the town to join a band of yogis in the forest There he stood in meditation with a big rock held above his head While he was engaged thus his brother Marubhuta came to meet him and urged him to return home but Kamatha in his irrational anger threw the stone held in his hands at Marubhuta and killed him All the yogis who were performing austerities there were infuriated at this wanton act of violence and threw stones at Kamatha and chased him away

Kamatha continued his evil ways and when he died he was born in hell Marubhuta, because of his good and forgiving behaviour, was born in heaven

5a

5a Kamatha's humiliation
Detail from Parshva's birth as Marubhuta

Jain Matha – *plan and elevation*

5d

5b Kamatha kills Marubhuta

c King Aravinda holding court

d Four courtiers

e King Aravinda seated with his queen
(Details from Parshva's birth as Marubhuta)

Murals in the Jain Matha at Shravana Belgola A.D. 1750-1775 or A.D. 1825-1850 Mysore School

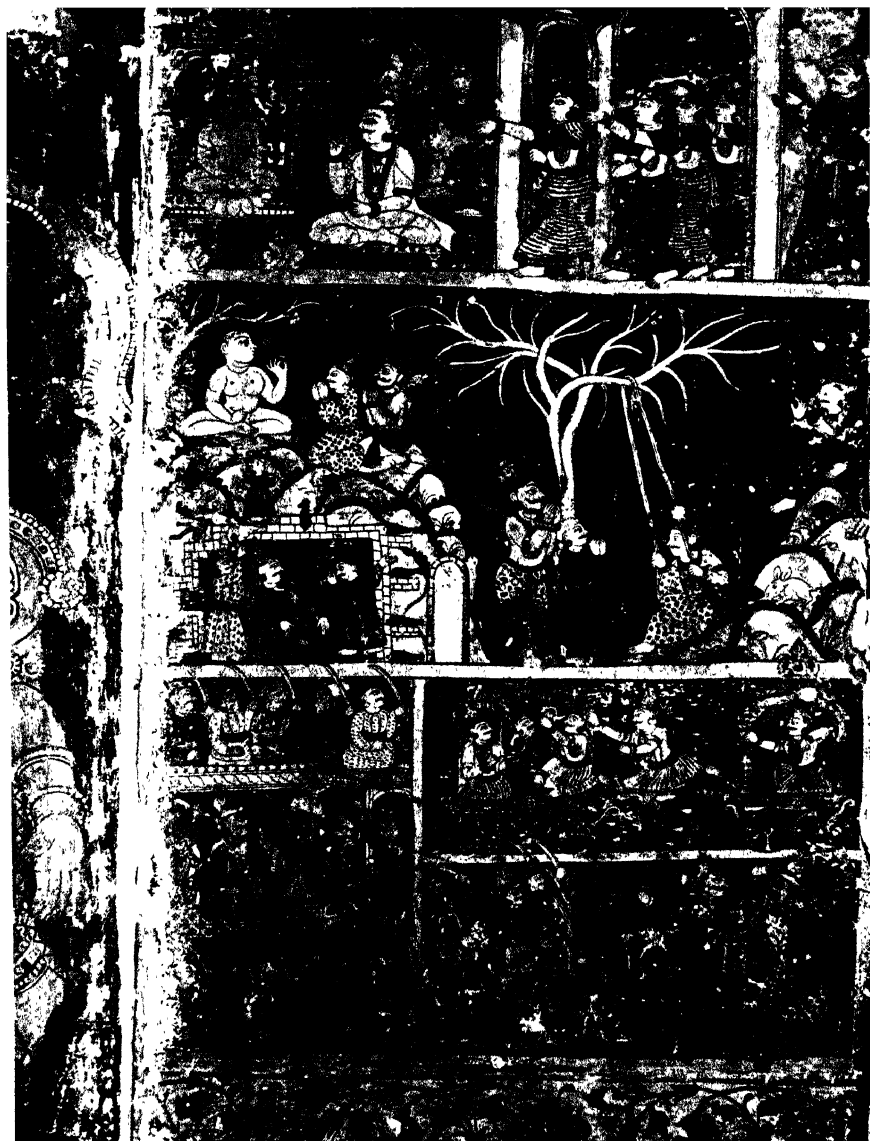
6 Kamatha born as a bhil attacks Parshva who is a Jain monk
Kamatha born as a beast, attacks Parshva who is a Jain monk

7 Parshva's Diksha-Kalyanaka

8 Queen Vama

9

Murals in the Jain Matha at Shravana Belgola
A.D. 1750-1775 or A.D. 1825-1850. Mysore School.

The marriage of King Ashvasen with Vama —
The Tirthankara Parshva was born as their son.

The story of Prince Nagakumara

10a *Panels depicting different incidents from the life of Nagakumara*
b *The subduing of the elephant by Nagakumara*
c *Detail of Fig 10b*

10b

10c

as well as two temples on the Chandragiri Hill and made land endowments for the worship of Gommateshvara. His wife also erected a temple on the Chandragiri hill while his son and sister-in-law built temples at sites not too far away from Shravana Belgola. The devout nature of Ganga Raja's family and their close connections with Shravana Belgola indicate that perhaps Ganga Raja commissioned these manuscripts.

The colophon of the manuscript does not mention the place where it was produced. It is not unlikely that these manuscripts were written and painted at Shravana Belgola itself under the personal supervision of the *bhattaraka*. These manuscripts are the sole surviving examples of the tradition of early miniature painting in Karnataka, perhaps because the preferred art form was mural painting.

Paintings of the Mysore School
After the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire in A.D. 1565, Mysore and Tanjore became the great centres of the traditional arts in the South. Both kingdoms were the feudatories of the Vijayanagara kings, and the style they fostered was continuation and conformation of that practised at Vijayanagara. Because of their common antecedents, the idioms that developed at Tanjore and Mysore, particularly in the field of painting, are very similar but not without certain distinctive characteristics of their own.

When the fleeing artists and artisans from Vijayanagara came to Mysore, Raja Wodeyar (A.D. 1578-1617), the ruler of Mysore received them kindly and extended all facilities to rehabilitate them. Most of the craftsmen settled in Mysore while some went to other parts of the state. Raja Wodeyar, a considerate and generous monarch built at Srirangapatnam a temple of Devi Nimishamba, the tutelary goddess of the painters of the Khatriya Raju community. In the state capital Srirangapatnam, an area appears to have been given as a grant to the painters.

Most of the painters continued to practise painting while some branched out into the allied fields of doll-making and preparation of banners. Almost nothing of their work has survived due to the destruction that attended the rise of Haider Ali and Tippu Sultan to power and their conflict with the British.

After the death of Tippu Sultan in 1799, the state was restored to the royal Hindu family of Mysore. The new ruler Mummadi Krishnaraj Wodeyar ushered in a new era by reviving the ancient traditions in music, sculpture, painting, dancing and literature through extensive support. An accomplished person, Mummadi Krishnaraja had a good knowledge of languages, and was himself a prolific writer. He was learned in astrology and *mantrashastra* and was a composer as well as a connoisseur of music. During his reign, (A.D. 1799-1868), several temples were built and decorated with painting and a large number of iconographic works were prepared for worship. The ruler's example was emulated by many of the subjects, thus generating employment for several artists and craftsmen. The work produced at this time varied from wall paintings, portraits of the Mysore ruler and members of the royal family and decorative representations of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. With the latter category can be included also the representations of Jain themes depicting *Tirthankaras* and motifs like the *samavasarana*.

The Samavasarana (Fig. 2)
c. late nineteenth century, Mysore School
Collection: A. Jwalmah
Size: 16 x 18

The theme of the *samavasarana* is very appealing to the Jain devotee. This painting shows the conception of the Tirthankara's audience hall as described in the Digambara Jain texts.

Neminatha Tirthankara with attendants, painted on glass
c. late nineteenth century, Mysore School
Collection: A. Jwalmah
Size: 13 x 11

This painting on glass depicts the Tirthankara Neminatha flanked by a *yaksha* on one side and a *yakshi* on the other. Even though the composition is formal and static, allowing little freedom to the artist, the result, because of its good drawing and mellowed colours with gold accents, is very pleasing.

Iconographical Portraits of the Twenty-four Jain Tirthankaras
c. late nineteenth century, Mysore School,
Collection: A. Jwalmah
Size: 18½ x 16

This series comprises twenty-four paintings, one for each of the twenty-four Jain Tirthankaras. The paintings, hieratic and iconographic in intent, show the Tirthankara seated in a niche in a pavilion with the attendant *yaksha* on one side and the attendant *yakshi* on the other. Occasionally, there are worshipful devotees and monks or nuns on either side, captions under the figures give their identity. Painted in bright chemical colours, these illustrations are of immense value in the study of Jain Iconography. It is possible that these series was not painted at the state capitals of Mysore and Srirangapatnam but at some provincial centre, like Arsikere which is not too far from Shravana Belgola, or perhaps at Shravana Belgola itself as it was not unusual for painters to work at places of pilgrimage.

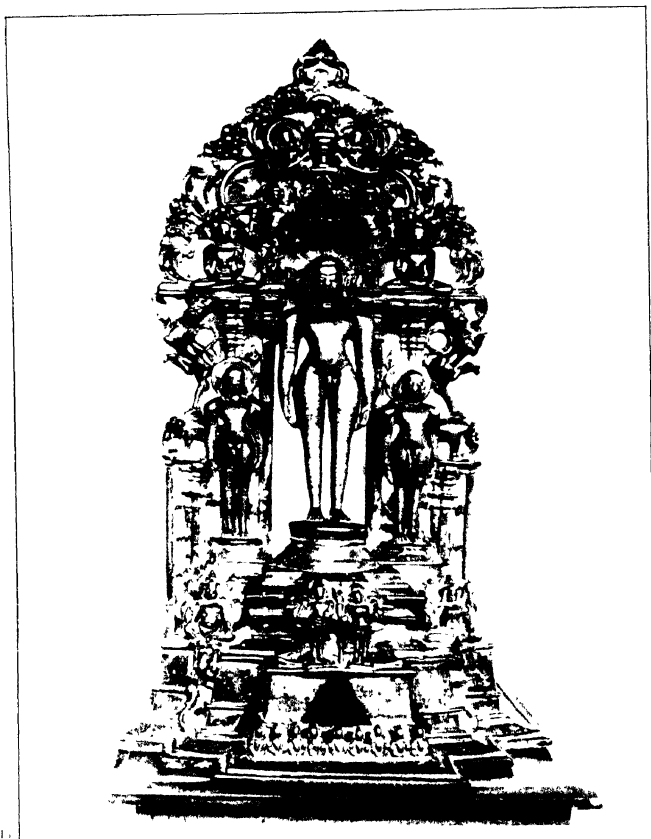
Wall-paintings *(Figs. 5-12)*

Some of the *basadis* had wall-paintings but, except for a few traces of colour, nothing survives of them. The only examples of wall-paintings now extant at Shravana Belgola are the murals in the Jain *matha*.

Murals in the Jain Matha
c. A.D. 1750-1775 or A.D. 1825-1850, Mysore School

The edifice of the Jain *matha* does not belong to the early period of activity—*c.* eleventh and twelfth

11. A Rakshasa

15

13 *Ratnatreya of Parshvanath,*
c. twelfth to thirteenth century,
North Karnataka style, probably Kolhapur
Collection Laxmisena Matha Kolhapur

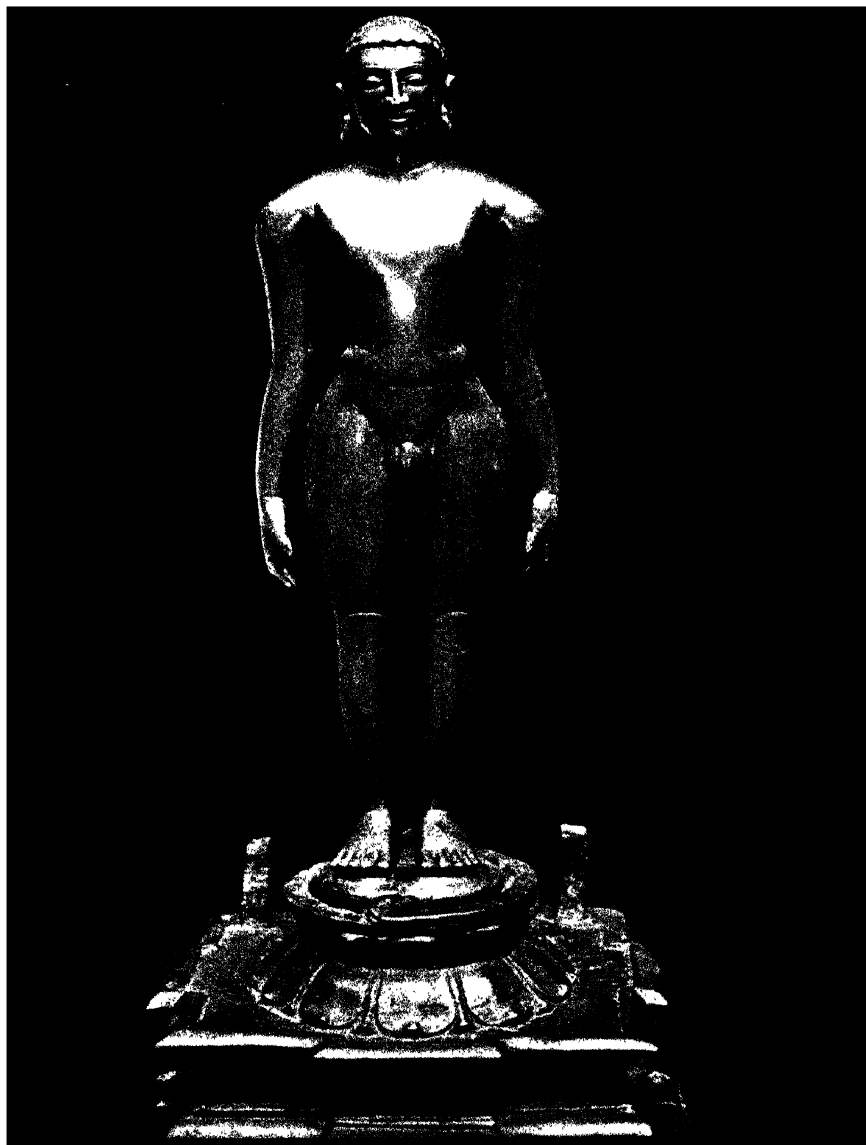
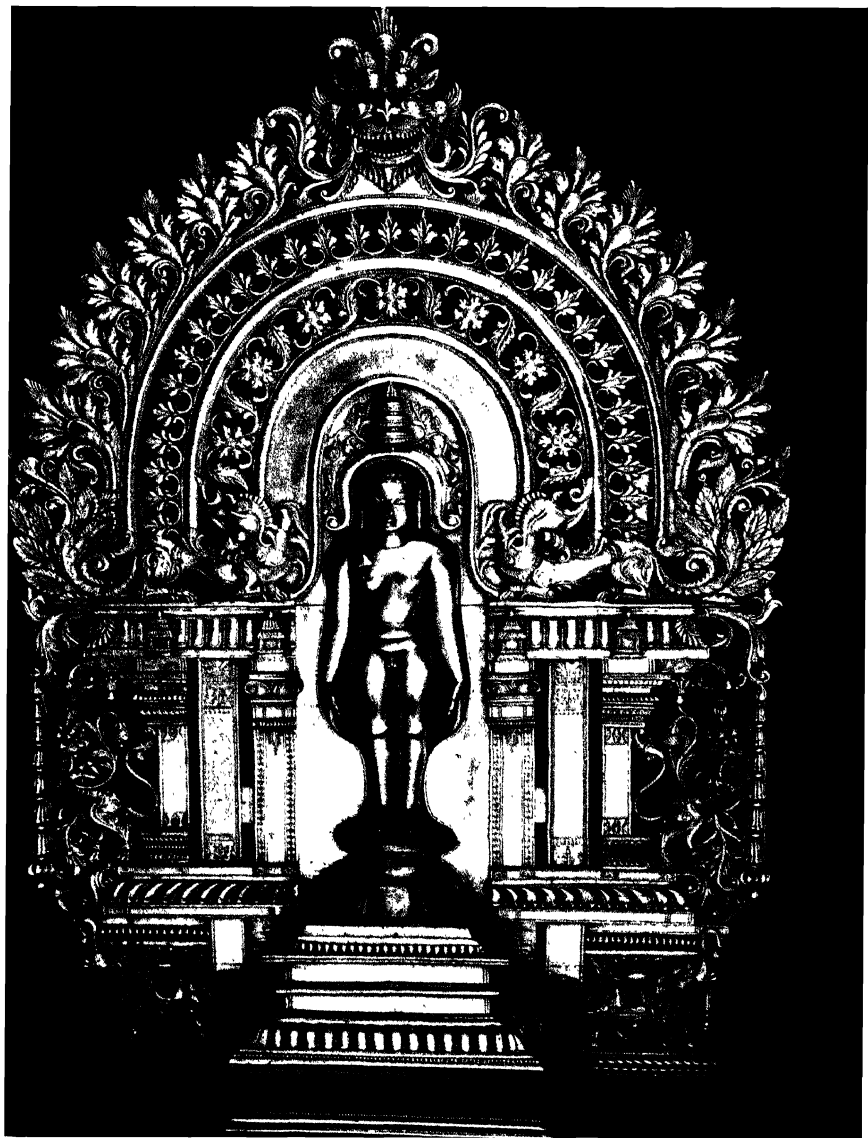
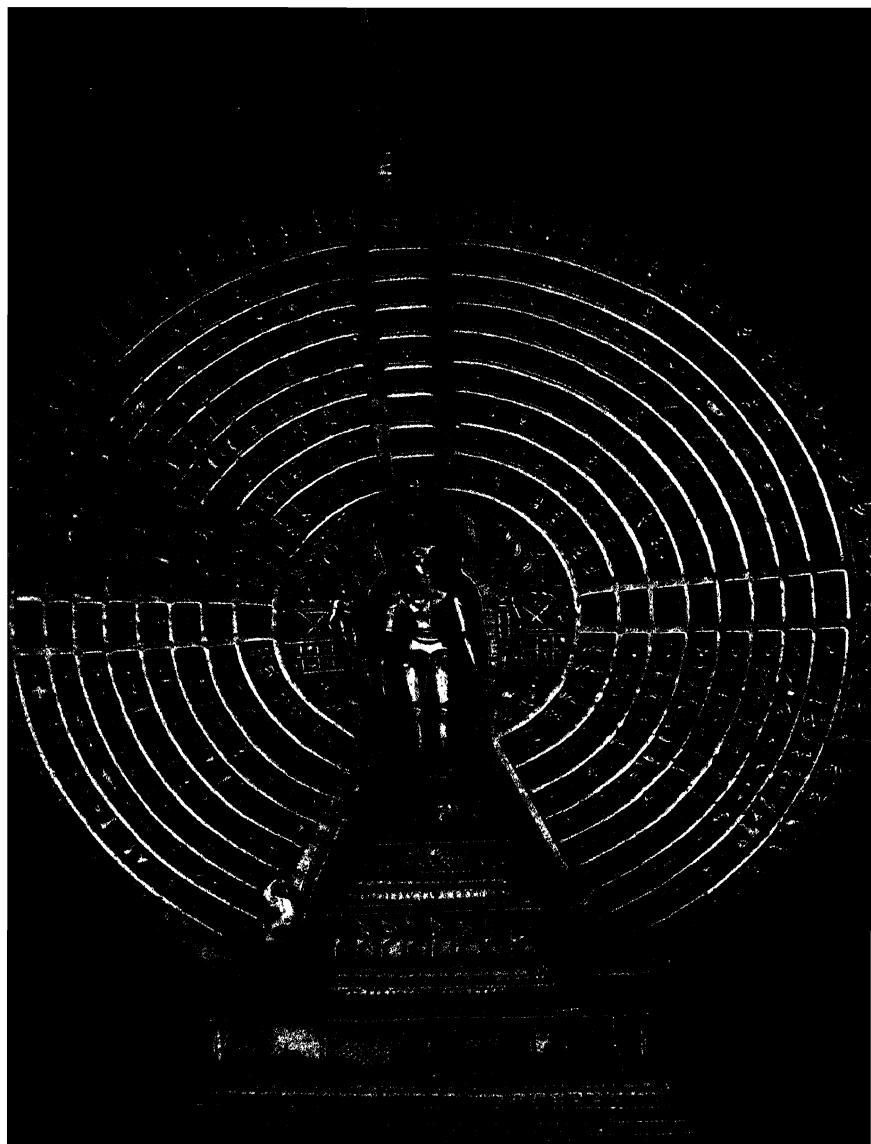
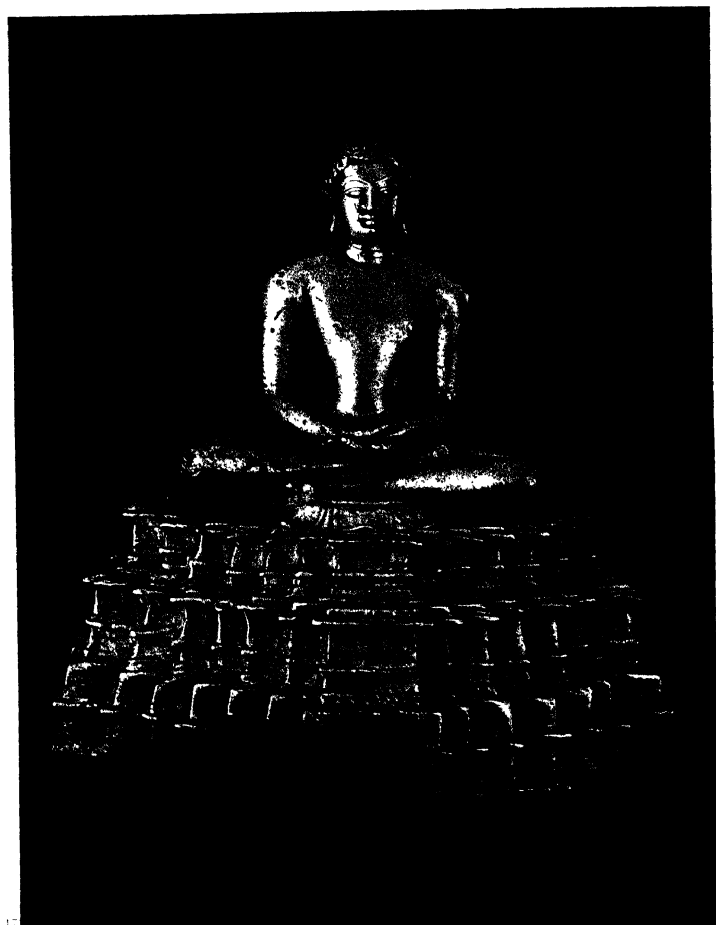
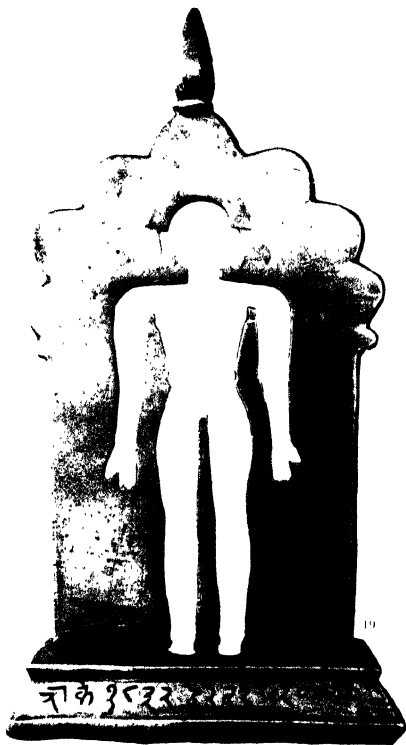
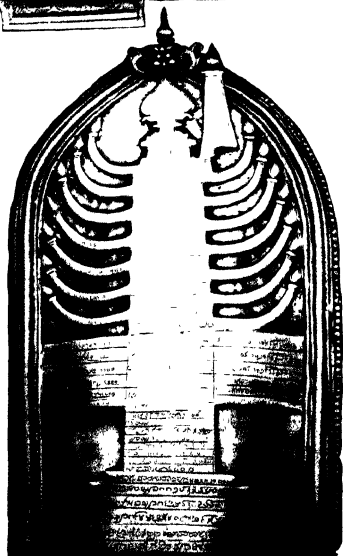
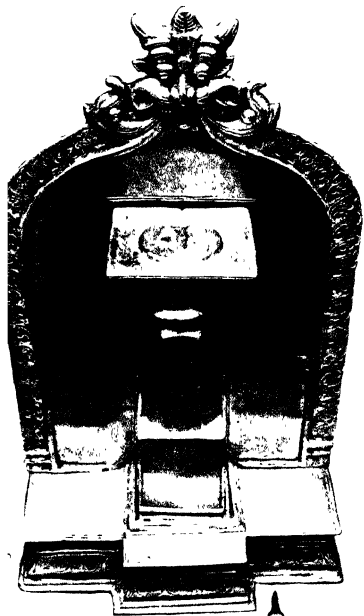
14 *Jina figure metal image*
c. A. D. 950-975, Ganga Period
Jain Matha Shravana Belgola

15 *Jain Tirthankara, metal image*
Mid-nineteenth century, Tanjore School
Jain Matha, Shravana Belgola

16 Samavasarana, *metal image*
Mid-nineteenth century, Tanjore School
Jain Matha, Shravana Belgola

17 *Seated Jina figure, metal image*
Eleventh century,
Private Collection Jinanathapura

19

20

18 *Footprints of Ganadhara, metal image*
Eighteenth century,
probably Tanjore School
Jain Matha, Shravana Belgola

19 *Siddha image*
A D 1910, North Karnataka
Aregala Basti, Jinanathapura

20 *Shrutaskandha*
Eighteenth century
Jain Matha, Shravana Belgola

22b *On the full-moon day*
of the bright fortnight of Ashadha,
in the year named Kalayukta
which comes after the lapse
of 51 years from Prabhava,
the 1780th year of the Salivahana era,
for daily worship in the matha
at Belgula,
this image of the Pancha Parameshthis
was presented by Perumal-sravaka
of Tanja-nagaram.
May uninterrupted prosperity increase.

Inscription on the reverse of the Navadevata image In Grantha and Tamil characters and Tamil language

21. *Sahastakuta*
C. A. D. 1920, Karnataka
Bhandari Basti, Shravana Belgola

22. *Navadevata Image with inscription*
A. D. 1858, Tanjore School
The Jain Matha, Shravana Belgola

centuries — at Shravana Belgola, but to a much later date, perhaps to the fifteenth or the sixteenth century. Prior to this, the *matha*, the residence of the *bhattaraka*, is believed to have been near the Siddhara Basadi but was demolished due to dilapidation and the present *matha* erected near the Bhandari Basti.

The *matha* is a pretty structure built around a central courtyard on a high plinth. A short staircase from the courtyard leads to the high, covered verandah which has a single row of cells on three of its sides. The cell opposite the entrance, in the east wall, contains the image of Chandraprabhu and functions as the *garbhagriha*. The cell to the right of the *garbhagriha* houses the image of Sarasvati, while that on the left houses the figure of goddess Jvalamalini. In the south wall is the shrine of Devi Kushmandini, the *yakshi* of Tirthankara Neminatha, who is also closely associated with Shravana Belgola. These divinities as well as the numerous stone and metal icons installed in the two wings adjoining the cella and extending behind the corner cells are worshipped daily. A cell in the south wall, adjacent to that of Kushmandini, is the room of *siddhanta darshana* which contains many images fashioned out of precious and semi-precious materials such as gold, emerald, moonstone and crystal. This room, until recently, served also as the personal chamber of the *bhattaraka*.

Since this building was the residence of the *bhattaraka* the walls of the verandah like those of a palace were appropriately decorated with murals extending from the ceiling to the level of the dado about a metre from the ground. Walls with door openings have only two horizontal registers of paintings above the door lintel. The painted panels on the walls are composed as long registers subdivided into smaller sections and varied lengths. The story begins in the topmost register and moves from left to right.

The panels to the left of the entrance, on the west and the north walls portray the life of Parshva, the twenty third Jain Tirthankara, and his nine past births. Of these ten births only the first and the last receive detailed treatment. The last section on the north wall above the door lintel to the smaller utensil room is not connected with the Parshva story and its subject is difficult to identify. It deals with the deeds of a *rakshasa* whose portrayal is immediately arresting on account of the similarities it exhibits to leather puppets. This correspondence among the various forms of the visual arts underline the unity that exists in artistic expression. Also, possibly the painter was the maker of leather puppets as well.

The panels are painted in a restricted colour scheme confined chiefly to shades of blue and red relieved by brown and deep green. Yellow is hardly employed, white predominates. The effect is of rich warm earth colours. The figures are directly descended from Lepakshi and Vijayanagara schools and are attired and bedecked in southern style. The sartorial styles of the male figures reveal considerable Maratha influence, which is understandable because the Marathas were very active politically in this area. Also close connections existed between Shravana Belgola and Tanjore at the level of the *bhattarakas*. The fact that the rulers of Tanjore were Marathas and Tanjore was, in addition, an active cultural centre, may account for the Maratha motifs in the art of Shravana Belgola. The architecture in the paintings shows light pillared pavilions with elegant superstructures and walls decorated with glass lamps of European origin. Among the landscape conventions, that employed to show hills is interesting.

On the opposite wall, the south wall, the panel between the cell of Devi Kushmandini and the Siddhanta Darshan chamber, portrays King Bharata in court. The remaining panels feature the *Nagakumara Charita*, the life of Prince Nagakumar. Although the version of the story which inspired these paintings is difficult to locate, certain episodes here and there — like the subjugation of the mad elephant whose violent behaviour had driven the people out of the town — can be identified. This story continues on the upper half of the wall surfaces on the west. On the lower half of one panel on the west wall, to the right side of the entrance to the *matha* is a forest scene of great beauty while on the lower half of the other panel is featured an interesting and important event at Shravana Belgola — the Temple Procession and the Annual Fair. It is a refreshing vignette among hieratic subjects.

The pillar between the two lower panels on the west wall shows the tree with six *leshyas*.

Even though the panels of the *Nagakumara Charita* are painted in the same stylistic idiom as the rest of the paintings the crowded compositions and the general handling of the subject reveal a difference — maybe because it is the work of another and not so accomplished artist.

The illustrated panels on either side of the shrine chamber on the east wall were broken a few years ago in order to install glass windows. According to old records the panel to the left of the middle cell featured religious subjects of iconographic interest while its lowest register depicted the *swami* of the *matha* expounding religion to his disciples. The panel on the right represented the Dasara Darbar of the Mysore King Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (A D 1799-1868) known also as Mummadi Wodeyar. It is indeed a great pity and an irreparable loss that these panels have been destroyed — particularly the one with the Dasara Durbar of Raja Mummadi Wodeyar, for the style of this particular panel would have been crucial in determining the date of the murals in the *matha*.

The problem about the date of the *matha* wall-paintings arises from certain apparent contradictions. Stylistically, the paintings can be assessed as having been executed c. A D 1750-1775. But, if Raja Mummadi Wodeyar figures in a panel, then the paintings cannot

be earlier than A D 1825-1850 Now, the question before us is whether the Dasara Durbar scene was painted at the same time as the other paintings in the *matha* or was overpainted on an earlier panel so as to honour the ruler's visit to Shravana Belgola The latter alternative seems the more likely, as the paintings commissioned by Mummadi Wodeyar on the walls of the Jagan Mohan Palace in Mysore as well as the miniatures executed during his reign reveal a slightly different idiom — its most noticeable characteristic being figures with faces in three-quarters profile and features modelled in light and shade The paintings from the *matha* are free from such devices and thus appear to represent an earlier phase of the style At the same time, the possibility that the paintings in the *matha* are expressions of a provincial conservative hieratic idiom, which was not receptive to the changes taking place in the secular works of the period, cannot be totally ruled out Hopefully, it will not be long before this question of whether the *matha* paintings belong to *c* A D 1750-1775 or *c* A D 1825-1850 will be sorted out

Metal Images

Images of the Jina were fashioned out of stone, various types of metals, semi-precious stones and precious gems These, according to the *Manasara*, a standard text on the subject in south India, 'should have only two arms, two eyes and a cropped head, either standing with legs kept straight or in the *abhanga* manner, or may be seated in the *padmasana* posture wherein also the body must be kept erect The figures should be sculptured as to indicate deep contemplation

It is evident from this text and others of its kind that the planning and execution of icons was based on prescribed canonical rules governing not only the proportions of the image but the casting techniques as well And, it was this excessive deference to ritual prescription that put a stamp of uniformity on the artistic expression of all Jain icons, particularly those of the Tirthankaras

It was the lay members of the community who generally commissioned the images and then presented them to either a Jain ascetic or a Jain temple The temple authorities stored such images on the temple premises and they were offered worship daily by the devotees Since many of the temples have been in worship for centuries, it is not unusual to find in their collections numerous pieces belonging to different periods, styles and regions too, for, many a devotee coming from far away places would bring an image as a gift for his preceptor For example, an image of the Gommateshvara in the Jain *matha* at Shravana Belgola is inscribed 'in 1780, the year of the Shalivahana era in Belgola known also as southern Kashi in Bhandara Basti was this image of Gommateshvara Svami set up after consecration by laymen Gopala and Adinatha, residents of Tanjore, for the fulfilment of the desire of Sanmatisagaravarni, chief disciple of the great Acharya Charukirti Pandita'

Like this image several others in the Shravana Belgola *matha* have come from the Tamil region, which is not surprising in view of the fact that some of the *bhattarakas* of Shravana Belgola came from that province Also it was not unusual for some images to be transferred from one place to another in times of war or calamity An image at Shravana Belgola — a truly magnificent piece — bears an inscription that it was presented to the Tirthada Basadi at Kalasatavadi How and when it came to Shravana Belgola is not recorded

The collection in the *matha* at Shravana Belgola consists of images of Tirthankaras and of attendant deities, ritual objects and *yantras*

Standing Jina Image (Fig 14)
c A D 950-975, Ganga Period, Karnataka, Jain Matha
Height 61 cms

Only a few of the very early Jain images have survived for posterity, chiefly because there were no organized facilities to ensure their protection and preservation prior to the eighth or ninth centuries Thereafter, with the establishment of the *bhattaraka mathas* this problem, to a great extent, was taken care of Even so, many ancient icons have been lost because if any of them became damaged they were not considered fit for worship and ceremonially cast into the river

Perhaps, this image has survived till today for that very reason, because it was cast in the river and escaped the fate which befell many other bronzes that were melted to make new ones This image must have lain in the riverbed, occasionally being swept away by flood waters or buried deep in silt or soil And so it lay for centuries until one day it was unearthed by the labourers of a coffee plantation The owner of the plantation, Mr Crawford presented the image to the *matha* at Shravana Belgola This figure, nude and standing in *kayotsarga* pose has an inscription which praises Kundana Somidevi, the elder sister of Nolambakulantaka Marasimha II (A D 961-974) The image was probably commissioned *c* A D 950-975

Seated Jina Image, probably Adinatha (Fig 17)
c tenth/eleventh century, Ganga period (?), Karnataka, Private Collection
Size 25 x 25 cms

One of the most beautiful images from Karnataka, this figure bears an inscription stating, 'Malabbe, lay disciple of Devanandi *bhattaraka*, presented (this image) to the Tirthada Basadi at Kalasatavadi ' It has not been possible to identify Bhattaraka Devanandi exactly but it seems that he is the same person whose name occurs in an inscription written in tenth/eleventh century characters near the Parshvanatha Basadi on Chandragiri Hill The date of tenth/eleventh century does not seem inconsistent with the style of this image Already, its pedestal shows the articulation that becomes common in the basement mouldings of Jain temples of the following centuries, particularly of the Hoysala period

Jina Image with elaborate prabhavali (Fig 15)
c mid-nineteenth century, Tanjore School, Jain Matha
Height 71 cms

The *Manasara* text states that the Tirthankara's 'body should be perfectly free from ornaments, but on the right side of the breast (a little over the nipple) there should be the *shri-vatsa* mark

Spectacular flamboyance appears to be the characteristic style of these grand and impressive metal images made in Tanjore around the middle of the nineteenth century There are several such examples in the Jain *matha* at Shravana Belgola many of which were presented at the instance of Sanmatisagaravarni, disciple of *acharya* Charukirti Of these pieces, a few were gifted on the occasion of the *shrivihara* festival in the Bhandari Basadi at Shravana Belgola held in A D 1856 Some more images were offered at the time of the same festival in A D 1858

The Samavasarana (Fig 16)
c mid nineteenth century Tanjore School Jain Matha
Height 122 cms

Although the theme of the *samavasarana*, the audience hall where all could hear the Tirthankara preach after his enlightenment, occurs often in Jain painting though rarely in sculpture, and even less so in metal Here the *samavasarana* is visualized as a halo around the Jina figure Its depiction adheres closely to textual sources in the portraval of the various *bhumis* — regions, the *ashta-mangala* — eight auspicious symbols, and the *ashta pratiharas* which comprise the *ashoka* tree, *chauri* bearers, halo throne, three-tired parasol beating of kettle drums, celestial music, and shower of flowers The *ashta pratiharas*, attributes, appear at the time of Tirthankara's omniscience and continue to be with the Tirthankara until his death and *moksha* The large size and grand conception of this piece suggests that it is a product of the Tanjore school of the mid-nineteenth century

Sahasrakuta (Fig 21)
c A D 1920, Karnataka Bhandari Basti
Height 137 cms

A huge piece, about 152 cm high in brass showing one thousand and eight images of the Tirthankara This image is used for *puja* during the *Ashtanika* festival

Navadevata Image (Fig 22)
A D 1858 Tanjore School, Jain Matha
Height 44 cms

An image in the form of an eight-petalled lotus on a pedestal, the centre as well as the petals above and below and the two sides portray the *pancha parmeshti arhat siddha, acharya upadhyaya* and *sadhu* The remaining four petals show the Jina image, the Jina temple the *dharmachakra* or sacred law, and the *sruta*, Jain scriptures

This particularly fine object is inscribed on the reverse

Shrutaskandha Yantra
c probably late eighteenth century, Jain Matha
Size 48 cms

Such *yantra* plaques are found in many Digambara Jain Temple The *yantra* represents *Shrutadevata* — Sarasvati, the goddess of learning On each of the different strata of the central pillar and the various arms emanating from it, is an inscription denoting the name of a section in the Jain canon and the number of verses in it

Ganadhara (Fig 18)
c late eighteenth century probably Tamil Nadu, Jain Matha

The *ganadhara* or the chief disciples of Mahavira are symbolised in the form of footprints for worship Here in this image, the motif is put on a pedestal The treatment of the *prabhavali* suggests that this image was made in Tamil Nadu rather than in Karnataka

Siddha Image (Fig 19)
A D 1758, north Karnataka, Aregal Basti Jinanathapura
Height 18 cms

According to Jain theology when a soul is liberated it becomes a *siddha* with no material form A *siddha* image is thus shown as a cut-out figure in a metal plaque The Marathi inscription on it indicates a north Karnataka provenance

Ratnatreya of Parshvanatha (Fig 13)
c twelfth to thirteenth century, North Karnataka Laxmisena Matha, Kolhapur
Height 56 cms

The Jain Matha at Kolhapur was very much a part of the *bhattaraka* tradition in Karnataka This image, probably made in Kolhapur or vicinity shows that in conception and execution the artistic expression in Kolhapur conformed to the styles developed in Karnataka

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Jain Inscriptions

Seal on Huli copper plates
A. D 597-608

1

Although the question as to when Jainism entered Karnataka is yet to receive an accurate answer, there can be little doubt that this religion had made its home in the province by the early centuries of the Christian Era. The Jains claim that their religion has been there much before that—from the beginning of the third century B. C. According to them Jainism was introduced in the Southern regions when Emperor Chandragupta Maurya and his spiritual preceptor, the Jain *Acharya* Bhadrabahu came from distant Pataliputra to the place now known as Shravana Belgola. And while this legend cannot be substantiated by historical evidence, it cannot be brushed aside as a mere myth either.

There are several references to this story in inscriptions at Shravana Belgola. And these lithic records, written almost seven or eight centuries after the event is said to have taken place, reveal the implicit faith and care with which the story was handed down from one generation to another through the centuries. The persistence of the belief as well as the fact that certain spots at Shravana Belgola are associated specifically with Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu serve to support the veracity of this tradition. This apart, the artistic and literary expressions of

Karnataka bear ample testimony to the continued predominance and popularity of the Jain religion in the area from very early times to the sixteenth century. Thereafter, the rise of Vir-Shaivism and Vir-Vaishnavism sent Jainism into a state of gradual decline.

During the thousand years of its heydey in Karnataka, Jainism made a significant contribution to the cultural heritage of the region. In the field of literature, the Jains were pioneers producing a vast body of learned works. Also, they wrote in the language of the people and hence were able to reach a wide audience. Talented scholars produced treatises of great erudition, and affluent and generous Jains came forward to commission copies of these works. Sometimes numerous copies of a particular text were made and then sent out to different centres. In this way the knowledge and beauty contained in these literary works were made accessible to many. In this context it is interesting to note that during the tenth century the pious lady Attimubbe, the daughter of a military commander and a munificent patron of the Jains, commissioned a thousand copies of the *Shanti Purana* written by Ponna for distribution.

The enlightened gesture of donating holy texts to religious establishments was known as *shastra-dana* and was practised frequently among the Jains until recent times. *Shastra-dana* achieved a threefold purpose: the spread of literacy, the popularization of literature and the strengthening of the doctrine Jain religion extolled it as a meritorious act bringing much *punya*, weal to the person who performed it.

Side by side with their contribution to literature the Jains made tremendous progress in the sphere of architecture and sculpture. They built numerous *basadis* (Jain temples) embellishing them with carved figures and decorative patterns Many Karnataka kings belonged to the Jain faith and their benevolent patronage saw the creation of such splendid monuments as the Narayana Basadi at Pattadakal, the Parameshwar temple at Konnur (originally a Jain *basadi*) and the Neminatha Basadi at Kambadahalli. Other superb architectural achievements are visible in the Brahma Jinalaya at Lakkundi and the Kamalanayana Basadi at Belgaum.

The Jains, chiefly traders and bankers by profession, were instrumental in promoting the economic growth and prosperity of Karnataka. The wealthy members of the community spent generously on building religious establishments and making endowments to them. A number of such pious acts and deeds have been permanently recorded by means of inscriptions on stone. The inscriptions are of great interest and value not only for the historical information they contain but also for their literary content and the calligraphic artistry of their engraved lettering

Karnataka, without doubt, preserves the largest number of Jain inscriptions in India. They reveal a sustained tradition from the fifth century A. D to the sixteenth century which proves to be an inexhaustible source of information of immense value in the study of Jain culture in all its varied facets.

Of special interest among the early lithic records both in form and content, is one from Gudnapur near Banavasi in North Kanara. Engraved on a pillar, about 6 m. high, it is indeed unique because its lines wind around the pillar from the bottom upwards just like a creeper around a tree. The text, consisting of twenty-seven lines, is written in box-headed characters typical of the Kadamba dynasty The inscription belongs to Kadamba Ravivarma's time (A. D 485-515) and records the erection of a temple to Manmatha or Kama by the ruler thus:

Fig 1

Ravi got constructed this palace of Manmatha.

This god Manmatha to whom the temple was dedicated is none other than Lord Bahubali of the Jains. The basis for this identification is provided by references in Jain literature in which Bahubali is called Manmatha or Kama. Although Kama is worshipped among the Hindus there are no known instances of an independant temple being constructed specifically for this deity. That the shrine belonged to the Jains is further stressed by the tenor of the inscription and the use of such words as *samaya* and *niryana* in the text as also the mention of a temple of the Goddess Padmavati nearby. This inscription also contains a description of the locale of the Manmatha temple. It says that the temple was situated in the centre of the site with the *rajavasagriha, palace, to its right and attached to it (the palace) on the left were two nrityashalas*, dance-halls.

Apart from the interesting nature of its contents this inscription is also important for various other reasons. Firstly, it provides us with the earliest known reference to the installation of the image of Bahubali. Secondly in it, for the first time, are recorded the names of the father and grandfather of Mayursharma, the founder of the Kadamba dynasty. And lastly it shows the symbols employed for representing numerical figures 1 to 9.

Having taken roots during the days of the Kadambas, Jainism continued to flourish in the period of the Chalukyas of Badami. The Chalukyas were a Hindu dynasty but like most enlightened rulers not only were they tolerant of other creeds but often extended generous patronage to them. Among the many instances revealing royal munificence to the Jains is a copper plate inscription of the Chalukya king Mangalesha. It comes from Huli in Belgaum and the seal holding the copper-plates together bears the motif of a tigress suckling a cub. The choice of this motif is of more than ordinary interest because the royal emblem of the Chalukyas was Varaha — the divine boar — and it occurs on all Chalukyan copper-plates. Dr. P. B. Desai explains this unusual representation in the following manner: 'As suggested from the names and titles like Jayasimha, Ranaraga, Ranavikrama, Pururana-Parakrama, Parakramesvara, Ururanaparakrama and Ranavikranta and their spectacular military and political achievements, the early Chalukyas stand out as a symbol of courage, adventure, valour and prowess. Thus the members of the family could legitimately cherish genuine pride over their heroic traditions and attainments. Mangalesha himself, as we have seen, was a great warrior. It is proverbial to describe a brave person as having been suckled by a tigress.'

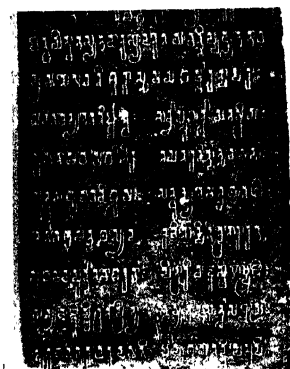
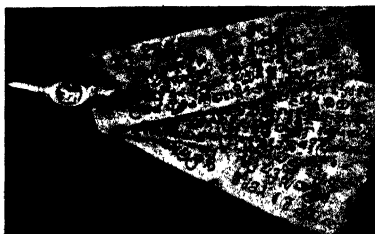
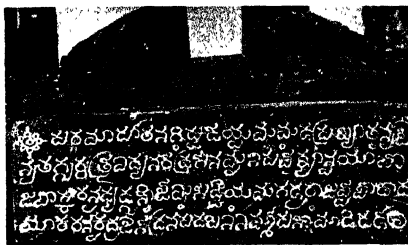
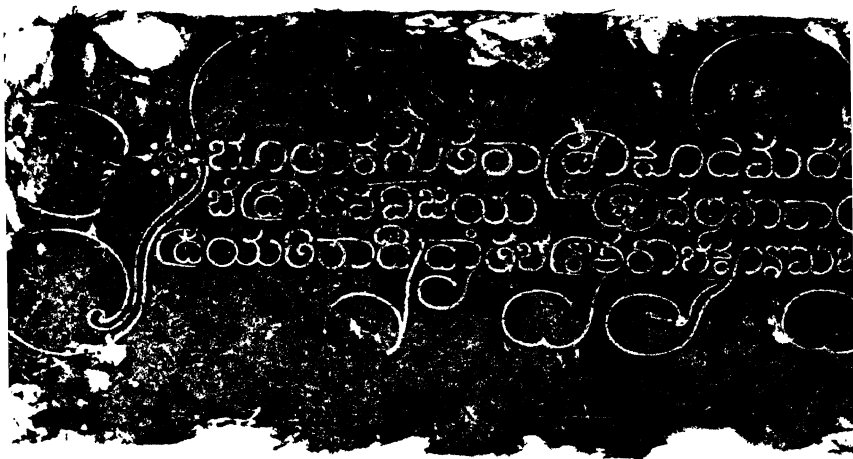
Fig 2

The Jain character of this copper-plate grant, becomes evident in the opening verses which are in praise of Shantishvara (Tirthankara Shantinatha) and the "religion of the *arhats*." It registers a grant of land in the village of Kiruvattakere to a *Chaitya* of Shantinatha at the orders of Manglesha thus:

> At the instance of Mangalaraja, whose second name was hero of battles, and who was ruling over the earth extending upto the waters of the three oceans, the powerful Ravishakti, the beloved son of Kannashakti of the Sendraka family and the serpent race, who was governing a village Kiruvattakere, gave to the Chaitya of Shantibhagavana fifty *nivartanas* of land in that very village. The manager (recipient) of the grant was Abhayanandi Acharya who was engaged in penance and self-control. He belonged to Paralur Sangha. He was the disciple of Shrinandyacharya.

It is apparent from this copper-plate grant that Mangalesha, a follower of the Vaishnava faith, extended support to Jainism also. We know that Mangalesha built the Vaishnava cave at Badami in honour of his brother Kirtivarman I and in view of Mangalesha's liberal attitudes towards other religious groups, it is not unlikely that he commissioned the Jain cave adjacent to this Vaishnava cave as well.

3

1

2

1 *Gudnapur Inscription*
A D 485-515

2 *The Huli copper plates*
A D 597 608

3 *Pedestal of an image from Lakkundi*
The Museum of the Kannada Research Institute Karnataka University, Dharwar

4 *Inscription on a pedestal of a statue*
Deccan College Research Institute
Poona

5 *Inscribed pillar*
A D 1178
Mahanavami Mandapa Shravana Belgola

6 *Stele with inscription stating Hulla Raja erected this Chaturvimsati Jina Temple*
A D 1159
Bhandari Basti Shravana Belgola

6

Another well-known Jain inscription of the Chalukya period is the famous Aihole *prashasti* of king Pulakesin II composed by Ravikirti Also belonging to the reign of the same king is a recently discovered inscription on a steep boulder on a hill near the village of Yerraballi in Bellary district Though the quality of writing does not bring any credit to the engraver, the inscription is of value as it gives the names of several Jain ascetics like Siddhanandi, Shivanandi, Sirinandi and Dharmasena, son of Ajitasenacharya, some of whom appear to have taken the vow of *sallekhana* The indication in the inscription that many Jain ascetics performed penance on the hill – added to the fact that there exist many natural caverns on slopes of this hill go far in establishing this site as an important Jain centre of the seventh century.

A trilingual inscription of the tenth century from Kurkiyal in Andhra Pradesh is unusual in that it was composed not in honour of a monarch but of a poet. This inscription composed by Jinavallabha in Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu states how king Hariga or the Vemulavada Chalukya chief Arikesari honoured his brother the celebrated Kannada poet Pampa Jinavallabha, the composer of this inscription, commissioned the carving of the images of the Jina and the goddess Chakravarti on Vrishabhadri hill near Kurkiyal. He also got constructed the Tribhuvanatilaka Basadi, the Kavitagunarnava tank and the Madanavilasa garden. It is of interest to know that these names correspond to the epithets given to the poet Pampa. This is a rare example where a poet's fame is perpetuated through an inscription Jinavallabha, known also for his high literary and religious achievements, in his tribute to his brother, the poet Pampa, extols him as.

> This hill, Vrishabhadri, is an embodiment of the fame of *Kavitagunarnava* (the poet Pampa) It is surprising that Jina is the master of Jinavallabha, who has converted the hill into the Jinachaitya Jinavallabha, the brother of Pampa of brilliant fame and fine poetry, is alone the lord of Maiden of Speech since he knows how to appreciate the greatness and express in fine poetry and tell the world in an exceptional manner.

With the revivalism of Hinduism, Jainism gradually withdrew into the region of Mysore. The decline of this once powerful religion becomes evident in an inscription of Bukkaraja I of Vijayanagara. Dated A D 1368 the text of the inscription can be translated as·

> During the time of Sri Vira Bukkaraya, dispute having arisen between the Jainas and the Bhaktas (Vaishnavas), the blessed people (the Jains) of all the *nadus*.. having made petition to Bukkaraya . about the injustice done by the Bhaktas, – the King, taking the hand of the Jainas and placing it in the hand of the Shri Vaishnavas of the eighteen *nadus*, including acharyas.. and declaring (at the same time) that there was no difference between the Vaishnava *darshana*, faith, and the Jain *darshana* (decreed as follows:) 'This Jain *darshana* is as before entitled to the five great musical instruments and the *kalasha* (vase) If loss or advancement should be caused to the Jain *darshana* through the Bhaktas, the Vaishnavas will kindly deem it as loss or advancement to their (own *darshana*) The Shri Vaishnavas will kindly to this effect set up a *shasana* (proclamation) in all the *basadis* of the kingdom For as long as the sun and moon endure, the Vaishnavas will continue to protect the Jain *darshana* The Vaishnavas and Jains are one (body): they must not be viewed as different.

While the inscription shows how the Vijayanagara king upholds the tradition of religious toleration practised by most rulers of Karnataka, it also reveals the pathetic position to which Jainism was reduced necessitating a royal edict to give it protection.

An interesting feature of Jainism in Karnataka was the active participation of women of all ranks in religious activities Various inscriptions mention women undertaking different

vows for the common good as also for personal beatitude. The former category includes lady Attimubbe who fearing that the *Shanti-purana* of Ponna may lapse into oblivion ordered a thousand copies of it for distribution to various Jain centres. The latter category consists of the earth, to him belongs, at that time, the reward of maintaining this gift. He who takes grant to a Jain preceptor, probably by the queen of Manasija, on the conclusion of her vow of silence owing to sickness. It was not unusual for the members of the Jain laity to make gifts to religious establishments on the successful completion of a religious vow. This eighth-century inscription effaced in places clearly demarcates the boundaries of the area granted thus "Kilkere of Tattagere; further on, the inscribed stone; from there the *vasele* tree and the black rock which should not be moved (?), the big banian, . . . sand and the tamarind tree; going further . . . river, banian is the boundary . . . the standing stone and the silk cotton tree of Kovalla (?) There the boundary ends." It ends with the customary verse "The earth has been enjoyed by many kings including Sagara; whosoever at any time is the owner of the earth, to him belongs, at that time, the reward of maintaining this gift. He who takes away land whether given by himself or other is born as a worm in ordure for sixty thousand years." Yet another inscription from Shravana Belgola contains a laudatory account of a Jain lady named Saviyabbe, who is acclaimed as the very embodiment of *Jinadharma*, unparalleled in the observance of *Shravaka-dharma*

> There is none second to her in the practice of *Shravaka-dharma;* she is indeed Revati herself in this respect; she is surely the daughter of Janaka in nobility; she is indeed Devaki in beauty, in greatness she is Arundhati herself; look, in her devotion to Jina Saviyakka is verily, the goddess of *Jinasasana.*

An inscription from Hire-Bevinur (Dharwad district) speaks of a lady performing the *vrata* called *kshitiruha-nompi,* a vow of planting trees.

The Jains attached great merit to the act of installing images of their Tirthankaras. Many of these have inscriptions on their pedestals, which are of immense interest as they contain such details as the identity of the Tirthankara, the date of installation, the names of the donors as well as the names of the illustrious Jain preceptors who inspired such deeds The inscription on the pedestal of an image from Lakkundi, now in the Museum of the Kannada Research Institute, Karnatak University Dharwar, for example, states that lady Rajavve, the daughter of Vaishya Jemisetti installed the image of Tirthankara Kunthunatha and that Trividya Narendrasena Munipa was her *guru.* The inscription on the pedestal of an image in the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College, Poona, is noteworthy because it was commissioned by a Jain preceptor. It speaks highly of the saint Munichandradeva who is said to have been held in reverence by the Rashtrakuta rulers. His teacher was Renuchandra, who installed the holy image of Nemijineshvara. This inscription, ascribable to the tenth century on paleographical grounds, reads:

Fig. 3

Fig 4

> Glorious indeed, is Shri Munichandradeva, the moon to the ocean of kingdom of the Rashtrakuta rulers, Nemichandrayati, the master exponent of the Jaina Siddhanta, is his venerable *guru,* he performs, with devotion, the pious act of installing this (image of) Nemijinesvara.

Among the recently discovered inscriptions is a specimen of a beautiful sculpture of a Tirthankara with miniature figures of the other twenty-three Tirthankaras around it. This *chovisi* image (of 24 Tirthankaras) made of black stone was discovered at Budarsingi. It is, fortunately, intact and its inscription reveals that two officers, Boppa — who was a *karana* — and Naganagaunda installed the images of twenty-four Tirthankaras in Hombolal (Hombal in Dharwad district). Neither the circumstances in which this image was installed nor the reasons for bringing it to Budarsingi are known The paleography of the letters suggests a

date of eleventh or twelfth century On the pedestal are verses in Kannada written in the *kanda* metre·

> The saint is Viranandi, the favourite disciple of the well-known Munikirti-munindra of Mulasangha and Desigana,
>
> Boppa the chief of Karanas, and the famous Naganagaunda installed, with devotion, the twenty-four (Tirthankara images) in the incomparable Hombolal.

The art of engraving in Karnataka reached its pinnacle in eleventh-thirteenth centuries in the days of the later Chalukyas of Kalyana and the Hoysalas An excellent example of this is an inscription from Shravana Belgola engraved on all four sides of the pillar in the *Mahanavami Mandapa* where the master-sculptor's chisel became finer than the tip of a pen, and the stone, smoother than a leaf This stone was set up by the Minister Nagadeva and commemorates the Jaina saint Nayakirtideva, who passed away on Saturday the 24th April 1178 The composition (a poetic epitaph in Sanskrit) interspersed with a few Kannada verses says

Fig 5

> Shri Naga, the great minister, who brightened the quarters with his rich fame, constructed with devotion, the *nishidhi-alaya* which would stand, as long as the moon, sun and stars do, to commemorate the *paroksha-vinaya* of the great Nayakirtideva-muni of wide fame

In Karnataka, perhaps more than anywhere else, engraving of inscription developed as an art, and science as well Sculptors of repute undertook to engrave the inscriptions and this art progressed simultaneously with that of architecture and of sculpture All three of them reached their zenith in the tenth-thirteenth centuries A D

Although this art was, like other professions, a hereditary legacy, there is reason to believe that schools were established where this art was taught and sculptors were trained, so much so that writing of inscriptions transcends the mere business-like recording of facts to an exhibition of the artistic talent of the individual engraver In many inscriptions the engravers state

> Under the pretext of engraving an inscription, is created, as though, a beautiful necklace of pearls around the neck of the Goddess Sarasvati.

Fig 6

The Kannada inscriptions of this period, with their round pearly-shaped letters strung together, certainly substantiate the engraver's claim

Because of the intensive activity of writing inscriptions, engravers were maintained by the royal offices and such engravers took pride in calling themselves *rayaruvari* or *rayasutradhari* (royal engraver, royal sculptor)

A very distinctive feature of some of the Karnataka inscriptions is the specific note made of the name of the engraver and occasionally that of the sculptor. The concluding lines on one of the *nishidhi* pillars at Shravana Belgola can be translated as.

> The writer (of the inscription) was *pargade* Chavaraja, a lay disciple of *Prabhachandrasiddhantadeva*, and the engraver the sculptor Hoysalachari's son Vardhamanachari an ornament on the forehead of titled sculptors.

Similarly in the Chandragupta Basadi at Shravana Belgola the screen with the sculptural panels portraying scenes from the lives of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta bears the inscription of the artist Dasoja. The name Dasoja appears again at the same site in an inscription of the mid-twelfth century, not much removed in time from the date of the screen, and conceivably refers to the same artist. The importance of this information can be judged from the fact

Nishidhi Stones
and the ritual of sallekhana

The rituals and practices of the Jains are directed towards the attainment of salvation Some of their rituals are concerned with daily ceremonies and worship while others are centred upon meditation and penance for self-purification All of them are designed to serve as aids to the spiritual progress of the believer and guide him from gross ignorance towards the goal of final liberation. Perhaps the most awe-inspiring of their religious practices is the vow of *sallekhana* through which one can strive for supreme salvation by renouncing all worldly ties and immersing oneself in deep meditation and self-mortification. This particular vow distinguishes Jainism from all other Indian religions.

In this world, say the Jains, human beings are forever trying to satisfy the needs and desires of the physical body in the hope of pleasing their real self—the soul. This belief, they say, is an illusion. For all actions of a person—good or bad—lead to the accumulation of *karma* which forms a veil around the soul obscuring its pristine purity. It is the *karma* matter which binds the soul and keeps it chained to the Cycle of Birth and Death. The ultimate aim of all human endeavour, therefore, should be to liberate the soul from this misery This can be accomplished only when no new *karma* is allowed to form and the existing *karma* is annihilated through the blaze of severe austerities The vow of *sallekhana* is devised to help man achieve this goal.

Sallekhana: definition and description

What is *sallekhana*? The various Jain texts describe it as the act of facing death voluntarily through fasting. The basic concept underlying this vow is the absolute subjugation of human passions and the gradual abstention from food and drink. This vow, an integral feature of the religious practices prescribed for the ordained as well as the lay persons, not only occupies an exalted place in the Jain Canon but also is highly recommended It cannot, however, be undertaken by anyone at any time. The Jain scriptures contain clear and unequivocal directions that *sallekhana* can be practised when a person is nearing death or when one cannot conform to religious rules owing to old age, incurable disease or when famine conditions prevail. If, for example, a person's failing eyesight results in repeated transgressions of the *ahimsa* principle then he can end his life through the vow of *sallekhana*.

The Jain scriptures and inscriptions employ terms such as *samlehana*, *samadhi* or *samadhi-marana* and *sanyasana* as synonyms for *sallekhana*. Occasionally the word *pandita-marana* is also used to denote this form of death

An important Jain text of c. fourth century A.D., the *Ratnakaranda-Shravakachara* by Samantabhadra gives a comprehensive exposition on the *sallekhana* vow, its content as also the manner of its observance. This text states that this 'vow is to be adopted for seeking liberation of the soul from the body as a religious duty during a calamity, severe famine, old age or illness from which there is no escape or against which there is no remedy. The all-seers (*sakala-darsinah*) praise *sanyasa-marana* (i.e. *sallekhana*) as the fruit of penance. Therefore everyone should seek his fortune in the *samadhi-marana*'. This text elaborates that the one who adopts the vow should observe religious injunctions such as overcoming all passions, giving up all his belongings, and with a pure mind severing all emotional attachments with his friends as also with his kith and kin. He should, moreover, forgive all and ask their pardon; should repent for past transgressions and should occupy his mind with prayers, meditating upon the *panchanamaskara-mantra* while he gradually gives up all food and drink, He must fast unto death.

Another Jain author, Somadeva, in his work the *Yashastilaka* corroborates the account given in the *Ratnakaranda-Shravakachara*. He cautions that factors such as the desire to live longer,

the desire for speedy death and longing for happiness in future life will render the vow ineffective In order to observe the vow without any obstructions he regards it as imperative that the person firstly choose a secluded spot which is difficult of access and thus discourage all visitors Then the person must curtail progressively all intake of solid food, thereafter liquid food, to be followed by total abstention from all nourishment except warm water and finally the giving up of water and observing a complete fast till death. These are the four stages of *samadhi-marana*

The vow is obviously very severe and difficult to observe An inscription on the hill of Chandragiri at Shravana Belgola describes it as being like the sharp edge of a sword, and another compares it to the fangs of a venomous snake

The *Acharanga Sutra* defines three forms of *samadhi-marana*. the *bhaktapratyakhyana*, the *ingita-marana* and the *padapopagamana* In the first kind the person wishing to undertake the vow must select an isolated spot where he can lie on a bed of straw without moving his limbs and abstain from food as well as drink. He must endure all hardship that may befall him until his death He should meet death with equanimity. The second kind of *samadhi-marana* — the *ingita-marana* — is a more exalted form of death and intended for a well-controlled and instructed monk According to this procedure the person should lie on bare ground and bear all pain. He can move his limbs, walk or sit or stand but must not consume any food He must meet death calmly. The third type of *samadhi-marana* the *padapopagamana* is the most difficult as it requires the person to stand upright like a tree without food and drink until death These three types of *samadhi-marana* receive notice in the Jain text of the *Adi-Purana* composed by Jinasena in the ninth century Other authors like Vaddaradhane in the tenth century, and Lalitaghate describe the *prayopagamana* vow as one where no movement, even turning on the side, must be made

From numerous inscriptions it is evident that all three kinds of *samadhi-marana* were practised in Karnataka by monks as well as householders For example, a lithic record of the time of Vikramaditya (A D 1009-1017) from Koppal informs us that Simhanandyacharya observed *ingita-marana* here, while another, at Shravana Belgola states that *pauggamana* (*padapopagamana*) was observed by Baladevacharya

The term *sallekhana* is derived from two words *sat* and *lekhana* which signify exemplary emaciation It implies that the one who undertakes this vow willingly reduces the strength of the physical body in the belief that it is the cause of endless miseries and a hurdle in the liberation of the soul. The elimination of the physical body is regarded as a conscious religious ritual which seeks to emancipate the soul through penance and self-motification. In the opinion of some, the observance of this vow is tantamount to suicide But indeed it is not. For, suicide is killing oneself abruptly by forbidden means in a fit of momentary anger or frustration without any ultimate end *Samadhi-marana*, on the other hand, displays none of these characteristics. It is a conscious act motivated by a spiritual goal and undertaken only when nearing death The mental condition of the person is calm and the procedure followed is in strict accordance with religious rules *Sallekhana* is not an escapist act, like that of suicide, but a courageous process demanding unshakeable determination and fortitude. *Sallekhana* represents a means to the ultimate goal of salvation and is the cornerstone of Jain philosophy

The poet Pujyapada, in his work the *Sarvarthasiddhi* refers to *samadhi-marana* as *pandita-marana* or as the death of an ascetic who has attained pure knowledge about himself. In this work the poet compares the body to a mansion and the soul to the valuables such as gems and pearls kept within the mansion If the mansion catches fire, he says, attempts will be

made to extinguish it. But if it becomes apparent that the fire cannot be put out then every effort will be directed towards saving the valuables — by destroying the mansion if necessary. Thus, the body has to be annhilated to save the soul

The Jain texts delineate in detail the procedure to be followed in performing the *sallekhana vidhi*. They enjoin that the person wishing to undergo this vow must first approach the Jain *acharyas* and confess past sins and perform expiatory rites for them. After this he must seat himself in *paryankasana* or *ekaparshvasana* on a mud platform in a square *mandapa* with a tower on each of the top corners. On the eastern and southern sides of the *mandapa*, Tirthankara images must be installed. Flags and festoons must decorate the platform. Lamps, burning incense, and other auspicious symbols such as mirrors, *kalashas* and flywhisks must be placed on the platform or near it. Jain monks, invited at the inception of the ceremony will sit on all sides of the *mandapa* and give regular discourses on Jain texts. Those seated on the east side will elucidate the *prathamanuyoga*, those on south the *karananuyoga*, those on the west the *Charananuyoga* and those on the north the *Dravyanuyoga* Other saints should be requested to read and explain the *chaturvidharadhana* scriptures and give guidance in the taking of food The person who is undergoing the vow of *sallekhana* should hear discourses on *sodashabhava*, the thirtyfour *atishayas*, *chidanandaikasvarupa vitaraganirvikalpa samadhi-svarupa*, and experience a growing dislike for the physical body and a desire to give it up

According to the Jains a person can prepare for the ultimate vow of *sallekhana* over the years. In the initial stages he must learn to forgo things he enjoys the most — particularly food The next stage is to fast frequently without food and if possible without water. Thereafter the person must eat simple food and observe fasts of long duration. He must eat less and less and fast as often as possible And then, when the end is near, he can undertake and observe the *sallekhana* ritual.

Nishidhis or Sallekhana Memorials

In Karnataka many of those who practised *sallekhana* were commemorated by their devotees or family members. These memorials are known as *nishidhi*, *nishidige* or *nishadiga* These words are derived from the Sanskrit *dhatu sad* or *sidh* and mean to waste away or to attain one's objective The largest number of *nishidhis* are found at Shravana Belgola

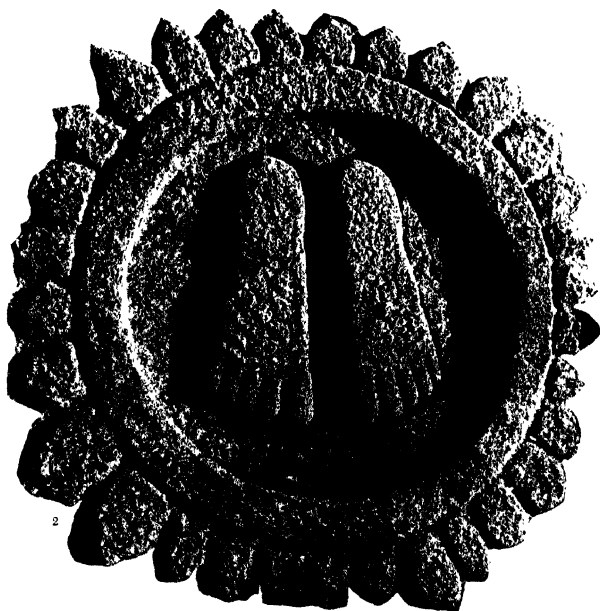
Fig. 1 *Nishidhi* memorials are of different types Some of them are in the form of inscriptions engraved on stony surfaces while others are represented by the symbol of footprints outlined *Figs 2, 3* or carved in low relief on the bare rock with or without an accompanying inscription. *Nishidhis* *Figs 4, 5* also take the shape of slabs or pillars with sculptured panels and inscriptions, some of which are extremely lengthy It is interesting to note that although *nishidhi* slabs and pillars are common all over Karnataka, *nishidhi* inscriptions and *nishidhi* footprints occur predominantly at Shravana Belgola.

Nishidhis at Shravana Belgola

There are 93 *nishidhis* at Shravana Belgola. Of these, 83 are on Chikka Betta — the small hill — known also as Chandragiri, 7 on Dodda Betta — the larger hill — called Vindhyagiri or Indragiri, and 3 in the town at the foot of these hills. In date these *nishidhis* range from *c.* 6th century to the 19th century. More than half of them — 54 to be exact — belong to the period of *c.* sixth-eighth centuries. Among those that remain 7 can be attributed to the ninth-tenth centuries, 24 to the eleventh-thirteenth centuries, 3 to the fourteenth century and 3 to the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries.

3

3

2

1 *Nishidhi inscription on rock surface*
Chandragiri, Shravana Belgola

2 *Nishidhi footprints on boulder*
Chandragiri, Shravana Belgola

3 *Nishidhi consisting of footprints with inscription on rock surface*
Chandragiri, Shravana Belgola

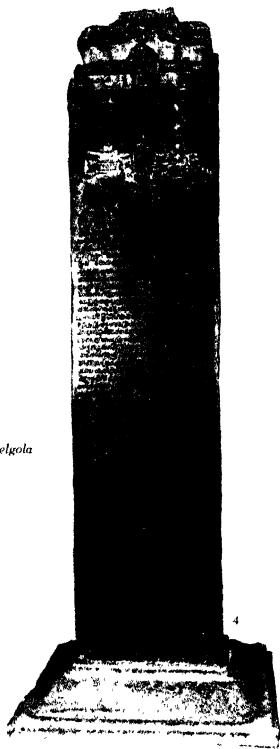
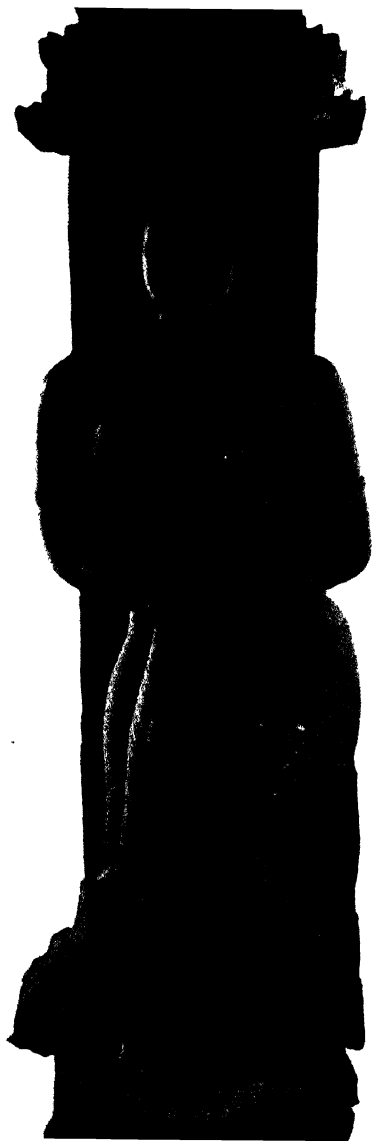
4 *Nishidhi pillar*
A D 1129
Parshvanath Basti
Chandragiri, Shravana Belgola

4a. *Detail of Fig 4*

5 *Nishidhi pillar of Panditaraya-yati*
A D 1398
Siddhara Basti, Indragiri, Shravana Belgola

4

5

4a

6 *Memorial for Saviyabbe*
Tenth century
Chandragiri Hill, Shravana Belgola

7. *Gullakayyajji*
Late fourteenth century
Indragiri, Shravana Belgola

We wonder why there were so many *nishidhis* during the sixth-eighth centuries. The reason for that may be the hallowed tradition of Shrutakevalin Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya having died of *sallekhana* on the Chandragiri Hill

The earliest lithic record at Shravana Belgola recounts this tradition and adds that in course of time seven hundred monks followed Chandragupta Maurya's exemplary act of *samadhi-marana* This is the earliest reference to *sanyasanaradhana* or *samadhi-marana* and it serves to show that the origin of this rite can be traced to the time of Chandragupta Maurya in the third century B C , if not earlier

Among the numerous persons who embraced death by *sanyasanavidhi* or *samadhi-marana* can be included such famous personalities as Kanakasenabaladeva muni, Acharya Arishtanemi, Veguru Sarvaja Bhattaraka and Charitra Shri Namadeva Nandisena The inscriptions variously describe the observers of *sallekhana* as having attained *siddhaloka, svargagrama, sakhyasthana, muktakala* and *devaloka*

Several inscriptions mention the duration of the vow and occasionally the types of austerities performed One inscription speaks of an old teacher from Tarekadu, disciple of Shrikalavir-guruvadigal, as having carried out the vow of *sanyasana* for 21 days and then died Another record states that a Jain *gorava* or teacher from Kalantur performed penance for 108 years on the small hill and attained *siddhi* through *samadhi*. Yet another engraving enumerates Gunadevasuri's twelve kinds of penance and of his attainment of *svargalaya* through *aradhana* One of the records mentions that Akshayakirti who came from Madurai was bitten by a snake! Certain that death will not be long in coming he undertook the *sallekhana vrata* and his soul went to *suralokasuka*

The Kuge Brahmadeva pillar represents the *nishidhi* of the Ganga king Marasimha who, 'observing the vow for three days with the rites of worship in presence of the holy feet of Ajitasena-bhattaraka at Bankapura accomplished *samadhi* ' The inscription consists of verses in different metres The pillar in front of the Gandhavarna Basadi is covered with an inscription which eulogises Indraraja the grandson of the Rashtrakuta king Krishna III, who after having observed the vow passed away on March 5, 982.

Memorials to women

Figs 6 Sometimes memorials were set up to women — most of them were nishidhis for nuns as well as ladies

The Jain nuns in this region are known as *ganti* or *kanti* The earliest inscription commemorating a nun is of the seventh century It records that Anantaganti performed the *dvadasha-vidhana* penance and attained incomparable *suralokasaukhya* Another *nishidhi* stone, that of Shrimatiganti informs us that she was the disciple of Divakaranandi and attained *devaloka* by *sanyasanavidhi*. This stone, installed by her disciple Mankattiganti in A. D. 1119, is in a shed near the Jain *matha* in the Shravana Belgola town

Among the *nishidhis* for lay women is the pillar set up for Queen Shantaladevi in the *mandapa* on the left of the Savati Gandhavarana Basadi. The inscription bestows glowing tributes on this pious lady. Shantaladevi observed *sallekhana* and attained heaven in A D. 1131 at the sacred spot Shivaganga in Bangalore district.

Another *nishidhi* commemorates Shantaladevi's mother Machikabbe When the good lady heard of her daughter's *samadhi-marana* she was plunged in grief and undertook the vow

of *duradhara sanyasana* for a month The inscription graphically describes her condition while observing the vow, her half-closed eyes due to fasting, her teachers discoursing on the *pancha-parameshthis*, her constant *jinadhyana*, and despite the onsetting weakness, the equanimity with which she extended solace to those who sorrowed about her approaching death.

Fig 7 On Vindhyagiri on a pillar in the *mandapa* facing the entrance to the *suttalaya* is a sculptured figure of a graceful young lady standing in *tribhanga* pose and holding a *karanda* in her hands Stylistically the figure belongs to the late fourteenth century The figure is identified as Gullakayyaji, the old lady who brought milk in the shell of the *gulla-kayi* fruit for anointing the huge statue of Bahubali. It is believed that Chamundaraya commissioned this statue of Gullakayyaji. However, neither the style of carving nor the youthfulness of the figure support this belief On the other hand, immediately to the left of the figure is an inscription of the thirteenth century stating that it is the *nishidhi* of the daughter of Shri Mallisetti In all probability the figure identified as Gullakayyaji is not that of the Yakshi Khushmandini but of Mallisetti's young daughter who died of *sallekhana*. The figure, however, appears to have been carved during the early Vijayanagara period as its anatomy, dress and ornaments indicate The difference between the date of this piece of sculpture and that of the inscription perhaps can be explained by the possibility that the figure was set against the inscribed slab at a later date Furthermore the sculptured panels on the pillar are comparable to those on *nishidhi* pillars Anyway, the mode of representation of this *nishidhi* is unusual

Nishidhis: Chronology and style

A study of *nishidhis* at Shravana Belgola reveals that the early memorials, belonging to the period of the sixth-seventh centuries, are in the form of inscriptions on rock surfaces, without any accompanying symbols. They record the name of the person who observed *sallekhana* together with various other details like the religious achievements of the person, the vastness of his knowledge and the type of *sallekhana* ritual adopted

Fig 1

Fig 2 This system appears to have prevailed until the tenth century when the motif of footprints was introduced as a commemorative symbol The motif was either outlined or carved in low relief usually with an inscription engraved alongside it.

Fig 3

From the eleventh century the *nishidhis* assume the form of an inscribed slab or pillar with sculptured panels These panels, generally two in number, feature scenes during and after the observance of the vow The lower panel shows the person seated in front of his preceptor and listening to his discourse. Both the figures have a *kamandalu* and a peacock feather fan. Between them the Jain scriptures are placed on a three-legged stool The upper panel features the person after his death in heaven seated at the feet of a Jain Tirthankara The long inscriptions on these pillars describe the virtues of the one who performed the meritorious act, his spiritual prowess and his lineage Frequently these pillars were installed in *mandapas* near *basadis*. Sometimes they are recorded also on the pillars or doorframes of the *basadis*. The earliest extant example of memorial pillars is the Kuge Brahmadeva pillar, the pillar is impressively tall and has the appearance of a *jayasthambha*. It is indeed a fitting memorial to the final and lasting victory of the soul over the body.

The *nishidhis* erected during the Hoysala period are a continuation of the earlier period except that the poetic records become longer and more elaborate, containing an elaborate genealogy of the teachers. The pillars are usually set up in *mandapas* near *basadis* or inside the *basadis*

Among noteworthies may be included the *nishidhi* of the great Jain scholar and saint Shri Nayakirtideva set up by Nagadeva the minister of Hullaraja in A. D. 1176. This pillar is in

the north Mahanavami mandapa. Interestingly enough in the epitaph it is called *nishidhyalaya*. The style is typical of the Hoysala period. The top of the pillar with its architectural decorations looks like an *alaya* and thus it is not surprising that the *nishidhi* inscription refers to it, as the *nishidhyalaya*. It is a rare form of *nishidhi*.

The tradition of setting up *nishidhis* on Vindhyagiri appears to have started much after that at Chandragiri In the Siddhara Basadi the pillar in the right corner represents the *nishidhi* of Panditarayayati set up by his disciple in A. D 1398. The lengthy inscription gives the lineage of the teacher

Ritual Sacrifice in Indian Religions

To sacrifice one's body with unwavering devotion for attaining spiritual salvation is not unknown in other Indian religions. For instance, *prayopavesana* or *nirashana vrata*, a vow more or less similar to *sallekhana* in spirit and practice, was observed by the Hindus. Vidura, a great moralist of the *Mahabharata* met his death by observing this vow. Another kind of vow, severe and torturous, was of severing one's own head to the personal god. We know that among the followers of the Shaiva-Shakta sect who practise *hathayoga* an occasional believer will sever his own head as the supreme sacrifice to his personal god. Sculptural portrayals of such scenes occur on the external left wall of the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal and at the bottom of the door jamb of a temple situated next to the Lakshmi temple at Doddagaddavalli A twelfth-century inscribed memorial slab from Tilavalli in Dharwad district depicts a Saura devotee jumping into the fire on the sacred day of the solar eclipse. The inscription on this slab informs us that this sacrifice led to the attainment of *suraloka* These examples represent rare and stray occasions when a devotee welcomed instantaneous death in a terrific way to please his personal god and with the implicit belief that it would take him directly to *svarga* In Jainism, however, the procedure is quite different It advocates the gradual destruction of the body as a religious means of freeing the soul from the physical body that binds it This is a unique feature of this religion and the observance of *samadhimarana* by hundreds of monks, erudite teachers and faithful devotees from as early times as the third century B C to modern times is truly remarkable and unparalleled. And hence it is not surprising that Shravana Belgola, with its long and continuous tradition of holy men performing *sallekhana* — many of whom are immortalized in *nishidhis* — holds an eminent position among the sacred spots of the Jains.

—A. SUNDARA

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Jain Metal Images
from the Deccan - Karnataka

The purpose of this article is to review some metal images from the Deccan-Karnataka In terms of chronology our review would cover a period between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries A D In terms of sectarian affiliation it would revolve chiefly around Digambara ideology, as the region is traditionally and historically connected with the Digambara ideology The styles of the two regions share quite a number of features thus making it pertinent that the two regions be discussed together

The penetration of Digambara ideology in Karnataka is linked with two legends In the first place it is the legend of Chandragupta and his teacher Bhadrabahu, who are supposed to have migrated to Shravana Belgola and performed *sallekhanā* The other legend is that of Samprati, the grandson of Ashoka, an ardent Jain himself, who sent missionaries to Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka and Damila (Tamil Nadu) to propogate Jainism We are conscious of the fact that it is difficult to affix sectarian labels to events and images of that period Yet, if subsequent developments are any indication, then there is reason to believe that it was the Digambara ideology that was preached by Samprati's missionaries Nevertheless, we wonder, if Chandragupta accompanied Bhadrabahu to Shravana Belgola and died of *sallekhanā* how was Ashoka so totally unaffected by the Jain ideals of *Ahimsa* and turned towards Buddhism after his Kalinga conquest

That the Bhadrabahu legend has penetrated deep in the Digambara ideology is evident from Harisena's reference to it in the *Brihat Kathā Kośa*, a work of the tenth century A D. An earlier stone inscription of the sixth century A D from Chandragiri, refers for the first time to this legend in the Karnataka A later inscription referring to a Jain Guru – Santisha – mentions that he restored the Jain faith, as it was under Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta '

All these legends, howsoever controversial, focus attention on Shravana Belgola The importance of Shravana Belgola is confirmed by the presence of almost seventy votive inscriptions on the Chikka Betta or the Chandragiri Hill there

The antiquity of the record in support of Jainism in this region goes back to the fourth century A D The Nonamangala copperplate grant refers to a Jain temple at Perbbolal

While the Kadambas, Chalukyas and Hoysalas did patronise Jainism, it is really the Gangas who were very strong supporters of Jainism Ganga Marasimha II (A D 961-974), the most prominent Ganga king, died after observing *sallekhanā* In the Deccan, the Rashtrakutas patronised Jainism and Amoghavarsha (c A D 814-880), of this dynasty, was an ardent Jain himself The Rashtrakutas and the Gangas were united by a marriage alliance Chandro ballabba, the daughter of Amoghavarsha was married to Butuga These close ties between the two dynasties had deep repercussions on the style of Jain sculptures

However, it is surprising that the penetration of the Digambara tradition further south did not take place through Karnataka, but through Orissa This is supported by the evidence of the Buddhist *Mahāvaṁsa* and *Kathāvathu* and the Jain work *Āvaśyaka Niryukti*

It is thus natural that during the flourishing period of Jainism in this region a prolific activity of producing metal images gained currency Incidentally, during this period works such as Somadeva's *Sāmāyika Shikshā-vrata* or Jatāsimhanandi's *Varāngacharita* and Harisena's *Padmapurāna* mentioned the need for the installation of domestic shrines by lay people Jatasimhanandi gives many details of such worship including *Mastakābhisheka* which has been considered of particular importance in Karnataka Ironically this was also the period when Somadeva in his *Yaśastilaka* stigmatises the ministers for melting down many images

and it is quite interesting that almost during this period a parallel atrocity was being committed in Kashmir by Harsha and other rulers

There is a basic difference in the configuration of the northern and southern steles Both the Digambaras and the Śvetambaras accept a certain configuration, viz the representation of the eight *pratihāryas* They are 1) *Simhāsana*, 2) *Bhāmandala* 3) *Chāmara Samuha*, 4) *Divya dhvani*, 5) *Sura pushpa vrishti*, 6) *Chhatra traya*, 7) *Divya Dundubhi* and 8) *Ashoka vriksha*

Probably because of their austere approach, the Digambaras do not represent the *Pratihāryas* on their stele Instead of music and trumpet, the upper part of the stele normally shows a gorgoyle emanating a floral scroll terminating in a *Kirtimukha* at the apex The metal images, however, show either trefoil floral scroll or an architectural configuration

These images can be broadly grouped in five varieties.

Figs 1-3 A The first group, assignable to the tenth century consists of a rectangular pedestal on which the image is placed Behind on two vertical columns is placed a trefoil floral arch, and a *kudu* chaitya-window motif, surmounts the post at each end

Figs 5, 6 B The second type is similar to the first, but instead of rounded columns has flat vertical posts over which a flat semicircular plate is placed In the centre of this plate is the triple umbrella and often a *bodhi* tree

Fig 7 C The third type has a highly elaborate *parikara*, but still inhibits the characteristics of the first group

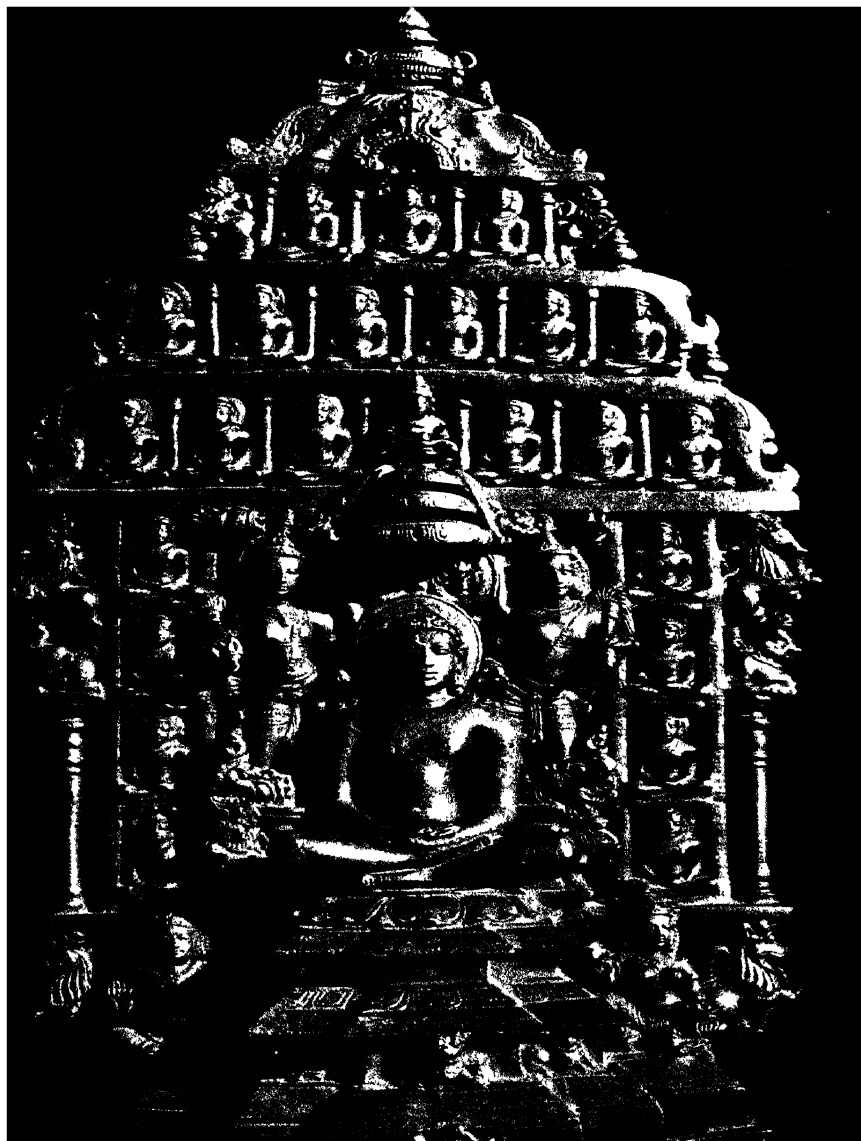
Fig 8 D The fourth type is of free-standing Jinas, individual and without the accompanying paraphernalia

Figs 9, 10 E The fifth type represents on open stele often representing the 24 Tirthankaras

To the first group belong two hoards, one discovered at Rajnapur Khinkini in Vidarbha and the other at Bapatla In addition to these there are a few individual images, mostly of the Jain Yakshi Ambika, now scattered in various collections and also the Yakshi image in the Prince of Wales Museum's collection though it does not have the *prabhāvali* Bali Chandra Jain who published the Rajnapur hoard is silent about its style while Ramesan who published the Bapatla hoard compares the female figures with those of the Chimakurti hoard now in the Madras Museum This latter comparison has been rightly questioned by Khandalavala Incidentally not all the images are of the same high quality as the others

On the one hand the male figures - other than Jinas - in this hoard strike a comparison with the Yaksha figures in the Prince of Wales Museum's Rishabhanath image from Chopda as well as the Maitreya image from the Sopara hoard The similarity in respect of modelling, dress and ornaments quite convincingly suggests a common idiom On the other hand, the female figures, with the heavily modelled torso and elaborate coiffure at once suggest a borrowing from the Nolamba sculptures from Hemavati This admixture of two idioms requires a proper scrutiny to understand the cross-cultural influences The Rashtrakutas had close contacts with the Gangas through the marriage alliance Ganga Marasimha II is known to have defeated the Nolambas and assumed the title of *Nolamba-kulāntaka* These socio-political events must have been the basis for the influence noticeable in the style of these metal images

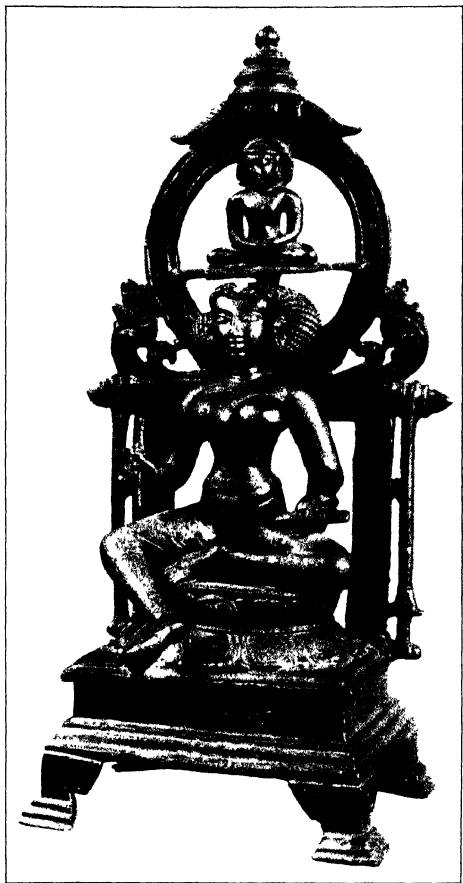
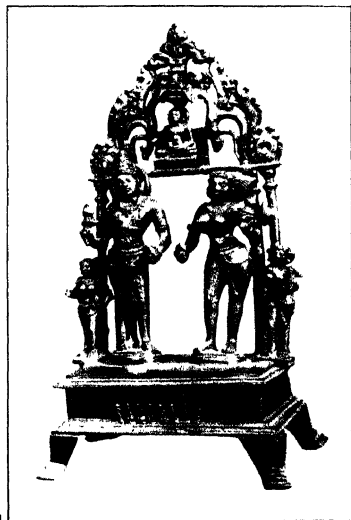
An image which demonstrates the third group deserves special consideration The bronze worshipped at the Kashta Sangha Mandir at Karanja is a triple image, as distinct from a *tri-tirthi*, for one of the accompanying figures is not a Jina but Bahubali The *Mulanayaka* is Mahavira, seated in *dhyānāsana* on a cushion — not lotus — placed on a *tri-ratha* pedestal

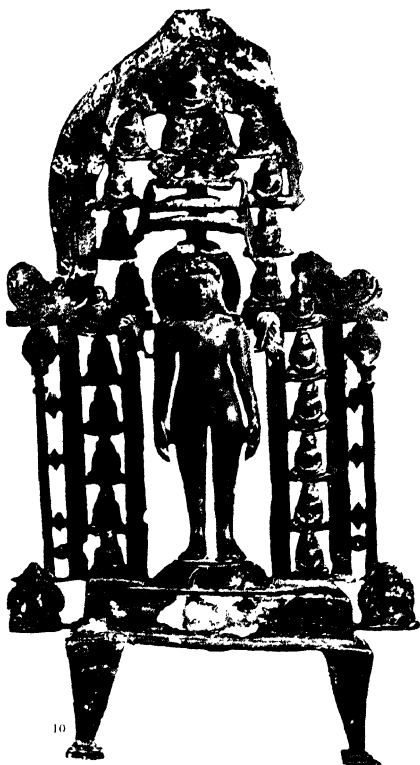
Bahubali (Detail)
Rashtrakuta Period, c ninth century A. D
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay

◄ *Chovisi of Rishabhanatha*
Karnataka
c eleventh century A D
Dept of Archaeology and Museums
Karnataka

1 *Parents of Jina (?), Rajnapur Khinkini*
c tenth century A D , Deccan-Karnataka Style, Central Museum, Nagpur

2 *Sarasvati, Rajnapur Khinkini*
c tenth century A D , Deccan-Karnataka Style, Central Museum, Nagpur

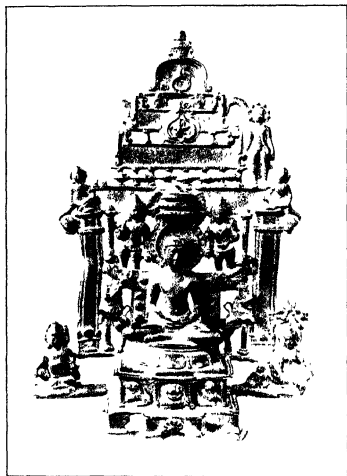
1

2

On his right, Parshvanatha is placed against an architectural column with a terraced *śikhara* surmounted by a *kalaśa* while on his left against a similar column is Bahubali

Conceptually the stele has an inner *prabhāvali* and an outer *parikara* The *prabhāvali* comprises a back rest, the nimbus with a triple umbrella and the two *chamara-dhara* Yakshas half emerging from behind the cross-bar, a typical Karnataka characteristic which was adopted even by the Śvetambaras in western India

10

10 Chovisi of Jina, Bapatla
c twelfth century A D, Karnataka
Archaeological Museum, Hyderabad

11 Tri-tirthi of Sitalanatha
c eleventh century A D, Southern-Karnataka Style
Swali Collection, Bombay

11

Colour Plate Yaksha-Yakshi figures in both these images relate them to the Karanja image On the other hand, the configuration is similar to the image found in Karnataka and of definite Karnataka idiom

It is interesting that two obvious Digambara images belonging to the Deccan-Karnataka idiom belong to the Lilvadev hoard of otherwise Shvetambara Jain images, now housed in the Baroda Museum

Fig 11 Before concluding we may discuss here another unique image The image is a *tri-tirthi*, though one of the Jinas is missing from the *parikara*

The *mulanāyaka* is either Padmaprabha or Sitalanatha depending on how his *lāñchana* is interpreted The *lāñchana*, which appears at the bottom of the pedestal, if interpreted as a

lotus, would mean that the Jina is Padmaprabha If it is interpreted as the *Śrivatsa* then the Jina would be Sitalanatha However, according to the Digambaras the *lāñchana* of Sitalanatha is *Śrivriksha* and not *Śrivatsa* The prancing lions below his lotus seat have been misunderstood as his *lanchana* and have led to the identification of the image as a Mahavira His *pītha* comprises two vertical columns supporting a crossbar with gorgoyle terminals and flanked by prancing *vyālas* On the crossbar rests the nimbus with a three-tier *chhatra* On either side of the nimbus is *chāmaradhara* Yaksha emerging above the crossbar

The *parikara* has been conceived as an architectural pattern The two vertical columns supporting a horizontal beam seem to represent the walls of a temple, over which is a two-tier *vimāna* surmounted by a *śikhara* and a *kalaśa* The structure is evidently of the southern variety On either side of the *tāla* was a Jina Today only the image of Parshvanatha remains while the one on the proper right is broken and missing

There are a couple of enigmatic features which deserve notice The shrine is evidently a Digambara one as is evident from the Parshva image, but, there is a mistaken attempt to indicate *sanghati* below the right breast by two incised lines Secondly the Digambara images either in Karnataka or further south never have *ushnisha* which can so clearly be seen in this image A third feature is the child seated by the side of the Yakshi Unlike the Śvetambara tradition in western India, in Karnataka, Yakshi Ambika is always accompanied by her two sons

Finally a word about the architectural conception of metal images which we notice after the tenth century may be relevant A temple is considered to inhabit all the *kshetras* and hence going to a temple is considered as visiting all the *kshetras* There are many inscriptions mentioning the merit one derives for himself and his forefathers in donating a temple Donating a metal shrine with such an architectural conception probably had come to signify the same content This trend is noticed all over India after the tenth century

– SADASHIV GORAKSHKAR

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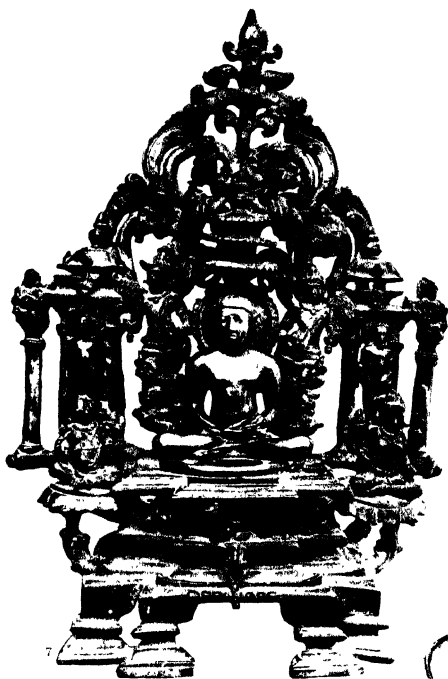

7 *Jina, Deccan-Karnataka Style*
c tenth century A D
Kashta Sangha Mandir, Karanja

8 *Jina*
Karnataka c twelfth/thirteenth century
A D, Sahasrakuta Basti, Arsiyere

9 Chovisi *of Rishabhanatha, Rajnapur Khinkini*
c eleventh century A D, Karnataka Style
Central Museum, Nagpur

7

8

9

3 *Ambika, Bapatla*
c. eleventh century A.D.
Archaeological Museum, Hyderabad

4 *Yakshi (?)*
c. tenth century A.D., Deccan-Karnataka Style, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay

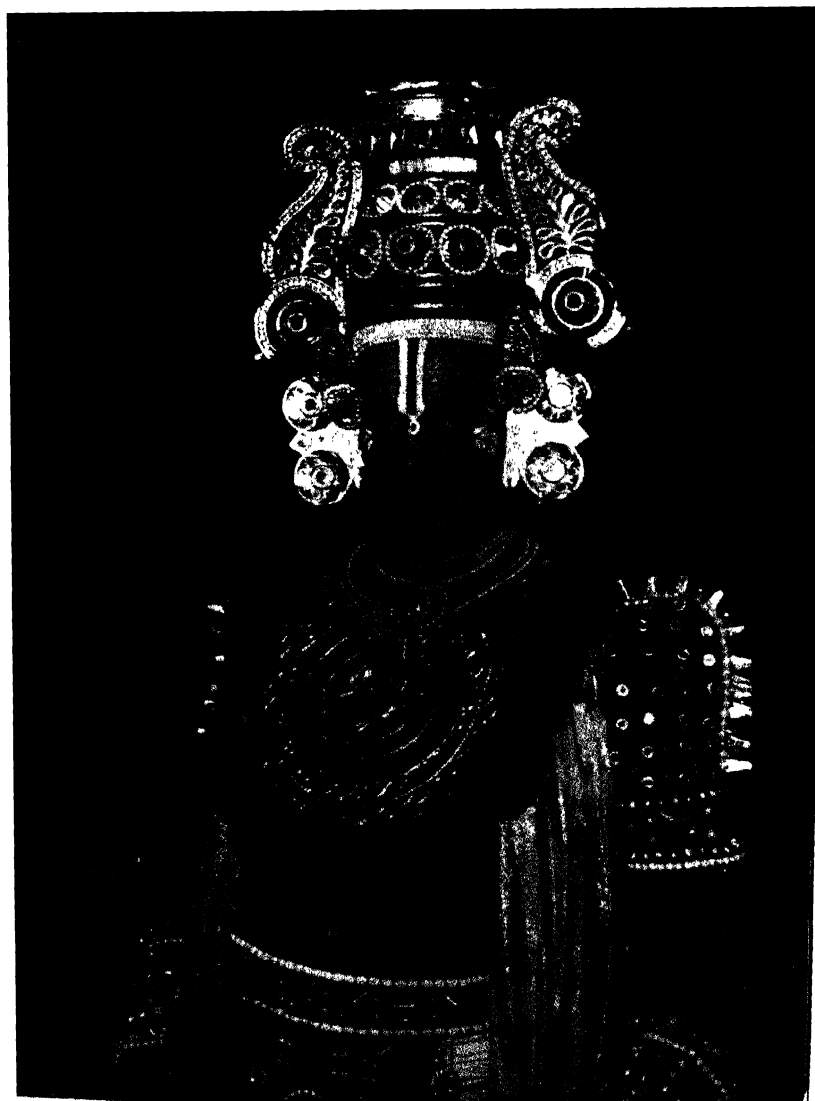
4

5 *Jina, Rajnapur Khinkini*
c tenth/eleventh century A D
Central Museum, Nagpur

6 *Jina, Rajnapur Khinkini*
c eleventh century A D, Deccan-Karnataka Style, Central Museum, Nagpur

The outer *parikara* has a vertical column at each end on which are seated two figures probably representing *Dikpālas* The trefoil arch is of an elaborate variety distinctly different from that seen in the first group Four musicians are seated in the branches. In the foreground, on two stemming lotuses are seated Matanga and Siddhayika, the Yaksha and Yakshi of Mahavira Both are four-armed in keeping with the Karnataka traditions

We can cite here two iconographically similar bronzes Of these one is in the Nahar collection at Calcutta and the other is in Musée Guimet, Paris In the Guimet bronze the *divya dundubhi*, above the *chhatra* is represented by a drum with a hand on either side

Figs 9, 10 Two bronze images representing the fifth group are reproduced here Of these one belongs to the Rajnapur Khinkini hoard and the other to the Bapatla hoard They clearly demonstrate the similarity of style pointing to a common origin A close look at the four-armed

Yakshagana
and its relevance to Jainism

With the roaring sea on one side and the sky-kissing western ghats on the other, lies the region of coastal Karnataka in southern India For four months of the year it is soaked in heavy rains and for the remaining part of the year it is scorched by the heat of the sun These climatic and geographical features have moulded and remoulded the life-style of the people of this province

During the past four centuries the rural folk of the region of south Kanara have evolved a form of dance-drama known as *Yakshagana* Simple and unsophisticated, it appeals tremendously to the uncorrupted aesthetic sense of the villagers As these people watch the thrilling performance they become totally involved and their naive minds unconsciously absorb the moral and religious values projected through the dialogues and discourses on stage

Tracing the origin of this performing art Dr K S Karantha, an eminent authority on the subject, says that *Yakshagana* was, originally, a form of music that once prevailed all over the Deccan plateau Now the term *Yakshagana* denotes a distinct art form popular in the Malnaad region in coastal Karnataka Apart from the performance with song, music and dance the various manifestations of *Yakshagana* include the *Talamaddale*, the puppet-play and the ballet

Talamaddale is a performance where music and dialogue form the main attraction Dance and costume are omitted in it The theme is usually an episode from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* The actors, dressed in ordinary clothes, sit facing one another The singer or the *Bhagavatharu* sings a stanza and the actors render a dialogue composed on the spur of the moment and related to the verse The impromptu nature of the performance provides immense scope for ready wit, repartee retort and also a display of scholastic abilities Song and dialogue keep alternating till the end of the performance

In the *Yakshagana* puppet-plays, puppets fashioned from leather and wood replace human figures This form of *Yakshagana* has a long history but, sadly, the opportunity to see it is becoming rather rare nowadays In these performances, dialogues in human voice from behind a curtain supplement the action of the puppets

Of the various forms of *Yakshagana* the regular field-drama has the greatest popular appeal Such a *Yakshagana* performance begins with a Ganesha Puja in the green-room. After the *puja* is over the singer and his accompanists take their place on the stage The chief participants perform a dance behind the screen This serves as an introduction of the characters to the spectators The background music is played on a *mridangam*, a harmonium and a *chende* The singer himself plays the *tala* or *jagate* as the case may be

Traditionally, the *Yakshagana* is performed in the Kannada language The rich music and dance, inherent in this medium, certainly transcend all barriers of language Dr K S Karantha has evolved, with great success, a form of *Yakshagana* for those not conversant with the Kannada language It has not only enabled people outside Karnataka to appreciate this dance-form but also evoked their admiration *Yakshagana* ballets have been successfully staged in many metropolitan cities of India

Two distinct forms exist in the *Yakshagana* tradition They are the *Tenku Tittu* and *Badagu Tittu* Troupes coming from places south of Karkala follow the *Tenku Tittu*, while those from north of that area observe the *Badagu Tittu* These geographical divisions, though not very accurate, are widely accepted The *Tenku Tittu* differs from the *Badagu Tittu* in the style of singing adopted, in the use of *jagate* instead of *tala* and in the elaborately designed ornamental head-dress or *kirita* that they employ Moreover, the type of *chende* in *Tenku Tittu* varies

◀ *A hero king in all his finery*

from that of *Badagu Tittu* being more similar to that practised in the temple of Kerala The singing, though classical, does not conform to either the Karnatic or traditional classical music It has its own characteristic style

The procedure in a *Yakshagana* performance is for a singer to sing a stanza while playing a beat on the *jagate* and for the actor to dance on stage his movements reflecting the actions and emotions of the song When the singing ceases, the actor renders in prose the theme contained in the stanza accompanied by suitable action It is a special feature of *Yakshagana* that the dialogue is neither written nor learnt or memorised It is composed and enacted spontaneously keeping in mind the stanza just sung It demands from the performer verbal resourcefulness, presence of mind and a tremendous command over the language

In matters of costume again, the *Yakshagana* is unique It is perhaps one of the few dance-drama idioms that remain faithful to a great degree to Bharata's *Natyashastra* The colours are usually, white red, green and blue They have a symbolic value, each colour indicating a certain character Curiously, it is the male rather than the female characters that dress gorgeously and wear rich ornaments The *kirita* the head-dress of the male figures varies in size, shape and elaboration—the more important a person the grander his outfit and crown The clothes of the female figures consist of a *sari* a blouse and a few pieces of jewellery In the facial make-up again colours have a special significance The face of a *rakshasa* must look exceedingly fierce and often for this reason rice-paste is used to bedeck the face

Like all serious disciplines in India *Yakshagana* was taught by a preceptor to disciple Now, an institution in Karnataka at Dharmasthala imparts systematic training in the art of *Yakshagana* in all its varied aspects and complexities

In recent years the *Yakshagana* performances reveal a decided impact of the Indian commercial cinema and Indian theatre The change is evident in the modifications carried out in costumes, the simplification of traditional techniques of facial make-up of the actors and music Even in the area of themes chosen for performance it is evident that social, historical and mythological subjects feature increasingly in the place of the traditional *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* themes.

A notable development in this context is the introduction of Jain subjects The story of Bahubali or Gommateshvara is a perennial favourite and is enacted frequently This is not surprising when we consider the important role played by Jainism in the culture of medieval Karnataka Performances featuring Jain stories find a ready audience among the large number of Jains living in Karnataka The Jain religious institutions also commissioned performances of the *Yakshagana* Jain themes at the time of religious festivals and occasions Thus patronage for Jain *Yakshagana* themes is not wanting In fact, *Yakshagana* as a performing art is steadily gaining in popularity The four or five troupes in both the traditional expressions—the *Badagu Tittu* and the *Tenku Tittu*—are flourishing

But to the purist, to the sensitive lover of traditional *Yakshagana*, who observe its changing complexion, the question of greatest relevance is in what shape will its art be at the end of this century?

—D VEERENDRA HEGGADE

Glossary

abhisheka — anointing or sacred lustration of an image

ācharva — preceptor

Ādinātha (Rishabhanātha) — The first of the twentyfour Jain Tirthankara of this era

āhārdān — The ritual of serving food to an ordained person

ahimsa — non-hurting, non-killing, non-violence

anekāntavāda — many-sided approach to develop a proper perspective in life

archanā — worship including chanting of hymns

arghva — offerings to a deity consisting of *ashta-dravvas* eight substances water, sandalwood paste mixed with saffron rice, flowers, *naivedva* (sweets) lamp, incence, *sriphala* (coconut)

arhat — Tirthankara

ashta mangala — eight auspicious symbols consisting of a parasol, a flywhisk, a pot, a mirror, a spouted pot, a flag, a palm-leaf fan and throne

ashtānika — eight auspicious days, usually the Nandishvara *puja* (worship) is performed at this time It occurs three times a year during the second half of the *shukla paksha* namely from the 8th to 15th day of the bright half, of the months of Ashadha, Kartika and Phalguna

basti — more properly *basadi* signifies a Jain temple This Kannada form is derived from the Sanskrit word *vasati* here meaning specifically the dwelling of a deity

bhattāraka — the pontiff of a religious *matha*

chaitvālava — abode of the ascetics

chakra — royal discus

chakravartin — emperor

chauri — flywhisk

dāna — a charitable gift

danda — royal staff

Digambara — the Jain sect whose monks are sky-clad (naked)

digvijava — conquering all directions

dīpārati — waving lamps before the image in anti-clockwise direction

Ganadhara — the interpreter of a Tirthankara's preachings

garbhagriha — sanctum sanctorum of a temple, wherein the deity is installed

gullakayi — egg-plant fruit

Indragiri — colloquially known as Dodda Betta' the 'Large Hill', it also bears the names Vindhyagiri and Gommatgiri

jayaghosha — cries of *Jai! Jai!* ('Victory! Victory!')

Jina — one who was conquered his passions

Jinālava — abode (temple) of a Jina

himsa — killing

kalasa (kalasha) — a pot shaped thus

kamandalu — a round-bellied pot usually carried by ascetics

kamba — Kannada derivation of the Sanskrit word *sthambha*, signifying a pillar

karma — according to the Jain philosophy, is not deeds' but matter consisting of fine imperceptible particles which form a veil around the soul and hampers the progress towards self-realization and salvation

Katavapra — the 'small hill at Shravana Belgola The word can be translated as the 'hill of tombs'

kāyotsarga — a yogic position where the body is under complete control needing no sustenance, nor performing any body functions

kevalajnāna — the attainment of omniscience

kevalin — one who has attained omniscience

kshetra — a place of pilgrimage

lesva (leshya) — tints the soul assumes corresponding to the intensity of passions or lack of it in the soul

mahāmastakābhisheka — periodical lustration from head to foot of the image with water, sandalwood paste, milk curds and clarified butter

Mahāvira — The last of the twentyfour Tirthankaras of this cosmic-cycle

manasthambha — a pillar in front of a Jain temple

mantra — hymn or chant

matha — religious establishment

moksha — liberation from transmigration

moksha-gāmi — one who has attained *moksha*

navaranga — a pillared temple hall covered with a ceiling divided into nine sections

nayavāda — declares that there are many points of view from which a thing can be looked at and that these points of view are relative

Neminātha — the twentysecond Jain Tirthankara

nirvāna — eternal bliss

nishidhi — a memorial to one who performed the ritual of *sallekhana*

pādopagamana — standing upright like a tree (pādapa) without food and drink until death

pañcha-parameshti — consists of the *arhats* the *siddhas* acharyas, upadhyayas and sadhus

Pārshvanātha — the twentythird Tirthankara

paryushana — a period of religious austerities, meditation and fasting

pitha — the seat of a pontiff

prabhāvali — halo

pradakṣhināpatha, — circumambulatory path

pratiṣhtha — installation (of an idol) for worship

ratha — a chariot

rathayātra — procession if a deity placed in chariot (*ratha*) on religious occasions

sādhanā — the process of learning as well as acquiring maturity and proficiency in any discipline

sadhu — monk

sallekhanā — absolute subjugation of human passions and facing death voluntarily through gradual abstention from food and drink

samādhi samādhimarana — a sanctioned religious process towards attaining salvation of the soul

samavasarana an audience hall prepared by Indra for the omniscient Jina circular in plan with an outer wall three concentric enclosures and four radical pathways leading to the centre
samvatsari the last day of *paryushana*
shāntidhārā concluding rite in *abhisheka*
shloka a particular verse
shramana shravana a Jain ascetic
Shrutakevalin one who has the complete knowledge of the Jain canon
Shvetambara the Jain sect whose monks are attired in white unstitched cloth
siddha one who has liberated his soul from the cycle of Rebirths
siddhānta accepted philosophical theories and dogmas
suttālaya cloister around Gommateshwara on Indragiri hill
syadvāda a logical consequence of the *nayavāda* it deals with the various points of view from which one can look at reality comprehensively
tapas penance
tirtha a holy place
Tirthankara The person who shows the way to achieve salvation of the soul
tirthayātra visit to a holy place
vaikhānasa ascetic
varna caste
vidhināyaka the movable image representing the immovable deity in the temple for purposes of various temple rituals
upadhyaya a learned man with the knowledge of the religion and rituals

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